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Ambedkar on Muslims

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Anand Teltumbde

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AMBEDKAR ON MUSLIMS

Anand Teltumbde

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Vikas Adhyayan Kendra
D -1, Shivdham, 62 Link Road
Malad West, Mumbai 400 064
Tel.: (022) 2822 2850 / 2889 8662
Fax: 2889 8941
Email : vak@bom3.vsnl.net.in
Website: www.vakindia.org

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To

All those who dared communalist ire in
helping the hapless Muslim-victims of Gujarat Carnage
and kept aloft a hope for India.

CONTENTS

Preface / 13

Introduction / 19

Myth 1
Ambedkar was against the Muslims / 25

Myth 2
Ambedkar called Muslims Terrorists / 29

Myth 3
Ambedkar believed in two-nation theory / 32

Myth 4
Ambedkar believed in cultural nationalism / 42

Myth 5
Ambedkar considered Muslims as Vandals / 51

Myth 6
Ambedkar's 'Pakistan or Partition of India'
is an anti-Muslim text / 55

Myth 7
Ambedkar thought Muslims always sang
hymn of hate for Hindu and India / 57

Myth 8
Ambedkar believed that Hindus and Muslims
cannot co-exist peacefully / 60

Myth 9
Ambedkar detested Muslims as Anti-Reform / 67

Myth 10
Ambedkar was on the side of the Hindus / 73

Myth 11
Ambedkar was a Nationalist / 78

Concluding Remarks / 87

Preface

The BJP is now desperate to maintain power. A loss in the next elections - that it cannot cancel without invoking a national revolt that may include some of its allies - would mean a serious setback to the party.

There is no doubt that some individuals in the BJP crave for governmental positions and the chance of personal aggrandisement that they provide. The record of the BJP (and of many of its key allies), is not salutary at the centre or in the few states that they rule. Corruption, misrule, failure of governance, has routinely plagued the party and its allies. The BJP and far more the Sangh Pariwar does not however, crave for power, only for the trappings of official positions.

The Sangh Pariwar has a definite agenda to implement. It wishes to change the nature of the Indian society and polity. It wishes to install a Hindu Rashtra in place of the secular democratic republican India that exists today.

There is of course the usual double-speak regarding the agenda and the concept of Hindu Rashtra. The Sangh Pariwar and the BJP love to coin new terms and distort the meanings of existing and established terms. The one intellectual exercise they constantly indulge in is

coining words, distorting terms and concepts, and inventing facts - particularly historical ones. Take for example the term 'pseudo-secular' or the statement that 'India is a Hindu Nation but not a Hindu State' or the term 'disputed structure' to cite only a few of the most recent examples.

The agenda of the Hindu Rashtra is not confined to the construction of the Ram Temple at Ayodhya (or even the additional temples at Kashi and Mathura), the enactment of a Common Civil Code, and the abrogation of Article 370 of the Constitution of India. It is not an agenda limited to a few specific demands and measures. It is an agenda for the reconstitution of India on a plank of Hindu supremacy, ultra-nationalism, militarism, and sub-regional hegemony. It is a thoroughly anti-republican, anti-democratic and anti-secular agenda.

The BJP has faced some obstacles in the fulfilment of this agenda quite consistently. It has not been able to mobilise masses despite invocation of communal and ultra-nationalist passions. The most it has been able to win over are some artisans of the intellect who suddenly find new virtues in majoritarianism and defence of the Hindu and upper caste cause. The other variety is of course some columnists and publicists who for long have lied through their columns in aggressive or subtle, overt or covert, rank crude or sophisticated manner. They may win over some middle class votes and confuse a few readers of newspaper columns (a diminishing breed anyway) but do not incite the masses to an open revolt against the Constitution and the basic spirit of the Indian nation and State. The best (and most) that the Hindutva forces can precipitate are orgies of violence against the minorities which so far have been limited in time and space, and far more important in their effect.

The extra-parliamentary path has not been possible also because of the stance of the armed forces - which have refused to play non or extra or anti-constitutional roles at the dictates or incitement of the Hindutva forces. The geo-politics of the subcontinent has also not favoured a mass fascist movement or its victory.

The Sangh Pariwar is thus forced to choose the electoral path to come

to power. This too is beset with major hurdles. The share of votes of the BJP has certainly risen in the past decade and a half but not enough to give it power. It also seems to have now reached a plateau. The alliance and the creation of the National Democratic Alliance have indeed brought it to power. The power is however shared. The allies may be progressively marginalised but the basic agenda cannot be openly implemented. There is also the worrisome factor that the people in the states with BJP governments invariably exhibit anti-incumbency sentiments and votes. (The exceptions have been Goa and Gujarat. The former is too small a territory to really cite as any example of a trend and the costs of the latter experiment nationally are not yet known.)

The BJP has thus sought new constituencies and votes. Geographically it needs to penetrate the south and the north-east. In social terms it must win over the Adivasi and Dalit votes. It has won some successes on both fronts.

The Dalits have never been charmed by the Sangh Pariwar. They have too often and too regularly been victims of the forces of aggressive Hindutva and Brahmanism to harbour any illusions about these forces. The attitude of the Hindutva forces towards the Dalits is almost a replica of their attitude towards the minorities - the Muslims and the Christians. Stay in the country in peace and security at our pleasure and sufferance is the 'promise' to these sections. We may grant you some concessions and rights but do not dare to agitate for them, and above all do not ever hurt the sentiments of the majority by even mentioning caste, caste oppression, untouchability, continued caste atrocities. In every instance of atrocity against the Dalits the Hindutva forces in one way or the other have blamed the Dalits themselves. This is the same attitude that says,"the Muslims in Gujarat got the treatment they deserved."

The Dalits nevertheless have to be won over, first as voters and then as street fighters in implementing the Hindu Rashtra agenda.

The alliance with the Bahujan Samaj Party, the participation of the Dalits in the Gujarat carnage on the side of the Hindu communal

forces, the softness exhibited by some Dalit leaders towards the overtures of the Hindutva forces have heartened these forces to some extent.

They now have targeted Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar. A few years ago, their intellectual darlings vilified Dr. Ambedkar and painted him in demonic colours. The BJP has now changed tracks. They not only find Dr. Ambedkar pratah smaraneeya (to be venerated at day break) but also a great champion of Hinduism, an anti-Muslim, and a staunch nationalist who believed in cultural nationalism. It is irrelevant to the BJP that Dr. Ambedkar was a great democrat who stood for liberty, fraternity and equality and championed the right to self determination of all peoples. It is equally irrelevant to the BJP that Dr Ambedkar was a strident critic of Hinduism and the inequalities perpetrated by it. It is also irrelevant to the BJP that Dr Ambedkar organised the most exploited and oppressed people of the country and struggled for the annihilation of caste. It of course does not realise that Dr Ambedkar represented a universal revolutionary position.

It cynically tries to appropriate Dr Ambedkar through its known tactics of lies, double-speak, misinterpretation, and misquotes.

The danger is that some sections of the Dalit masses may be misled by these tactics. The labouring Dalit masses will not be taken in by the promise of a Hindu paradise in a Hindu Rashtra but some sections that now have aspirations of upward mobility and of integration into the Hindu mainstream may jump on the bandwagon. They may be irrelevant in the main by themselves but do have the capacity to confuse masses.

It is therefore absolutely essential that the attempted saffronisation of Dr. Ambedkar be exposed and opposed. It is necessary that the reactionary forces are not allowed to hijack Dr Ambedkar, distort his message or pervert his mission.

In this booklet Dr. Anand Teltumbde takes up this task.

He picks up every canard spread by the Hindutva publicists regarding Dr. Ambedkar and exposes the lies. He does so in a scholarly manner

but with an activist's passion. He quotes profusely from Dr. Ambedkar's writings and speeches to set the record straight, and to counter the distortions. The elaborate quotations and the impeccable references make his arguments iron clad.

The book is also important to those who are not taken in by the Hindutva propaganda. This is not only so as new material in their arguments against the reactionary forces but also a learning exercise. Many will find Dr Ambedkar's views on nationalism, nationhood and parliamentary democracy very enlightening. They dispel some other popularly held myths regarding Dr Ambedkar.

VAK is extremely happy to bring this timely publication for its readers.

We also wish to express our appreciation of Dr Anand Teltumbde's great efforts. We are grateful that he acceded to our request and wrote this booklet despite many other pressures on his time and energies.

Mumbai — Sandeep Pendse

June 2003.

Introduction

In the face of it, the controversy created by Mr. Vinay Katiyar, State President of the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP), Uttar Pradesh, by calling Babasaheb Ambedkar as 'anti-Muslim' during his 14 days Yatra of 30 districts in the state in January this year, is not at all new. The pro-Hindutva characterization of Ambedkar by the Sangh Pariwar (SP) has been going on at least for the last three decades.

Initially, the Hindutva forces grudged Ambedkar's virulent criticism of everything Hindu and sulked over his forsaking Hindu religion and embracing Buddhism. But when they realized that Ambedkar symbolized aspirations of the vast majority of Dalits in the country who constituted at least 16 % of the total population and hence any criticism of Ambedkar would mean alienation of the entire Dalit-mass from the Sangh Pariwar, they adopted a strategy of co-opting Ambedkar. This strategy led to the launch of the Samajik Samrasata Manch- (a social assimilation platform) that provided space for the willing sections of Dalits to be brainwashed by the Sangh Pariwar. The basic thrust of the Manch is to attract the intellectual-like Dalits and prop them up so that these harebrained people who never enjoyed any particular prestige before, would feel happy to be important and in the process, become obligated to the Pariwar to courier its creed to the

Dalit masses. It is a different matter that the Dalit masses, though unlettered and un-intellectual, knew by faith that the Sangh Pariwar is a den of Brahmanism and as Babasaheb Ambedkar told them, it constituted their enemy camp. Thus they are not particularly influenced by these sahebs. All the same, these people, by virtue of their natural status in their setting, reinforced by the Pariwar-patronage, do possess significant power and potential to spread confusion in certain sections of Dalits.

Much of the thrust of the Sangh Pariwar is on craftily mutating the Ambedkar-icon as to fit it into their pantheon of gods. They know the value of the Ambedkar- icon to the Dalit masses. If they succeeded in selling the mutated Ambedkar-icon to the Dalit masses, the battle was more or less won. Not only would it emasculate the entire Dalit movement, sapping it of its revolutionary virility, but it would also get the Sangh Pariwar the numbers that would lend them certainty of winning and perpetuating political power. It is this project under which Babasaheb Ambedkar became their Pratah Smaraniya (one who is remembered with veneration before the day begins). They began presenting him as the greatest benefactor of the Hindus, as true nationalist- cultural nationalist, as a Muslim-hater and as one opposed to communism. Slowly but steadily, they raised layers of saffron over the Ambedkar-icon. They took out processions (sandesh yatras), held a number of seminars and discussion sessions, and produced and distributed tons of propaganda literature. One set of people engaged themselves in subtle craft of intellectualizing the familiar version of the Ambedkar-rebellion to their advantage and bringing it legitimacy by indulging in self-criticism and remorse, for not having understood him. The other set just went about spreading lies. The third set, represented by pseudo-intellectuals like Arun Shourie, tried its luck at Ambedkar-baiting intermittently.

While the Sangh Pariwar co-opts Babasaheb Ambedkar, it shrewdly avoids talking about his mission of annihilation of castes or vision of creating India based on liberty, equality and fraternity. The entire SP propaganda tends to assume away the very problem, for the resolution of which, he staked his entire life. They tend to treat castes in Hindu

society, for instance, as a virtual reality that can be switched off at will, a baseless custom that will go away just by wishing for it. In its typical doublespeak, one comes across ardent advocacy for the institution of castes and sometimes, a ridiculous alibi that it was a defensive device for preserving Hindu society from 'Muslim' assaults in medieval times. It has never expressed shame or sorrow over its oppressive past in unambiguous terms. Nor has it ever bothered to come out with any concrete programme towards abolishing castes. It just keeps on parroting with paternalistic arrogance that "We are all Hindus, where is untouchability? Where are castes? We are all one; we have only one varna and one jati, that is Hindu!" What a simple solution to the problem of castes! It's a veritable insult to Dr. Ambedkar who devoted his entire life to the struggle against castes! As for his vision, the SP with its fascist pedigree stands nakedly opposed to the principle of liberty, equality and fraternity. The simpletons of the Sangh Pariwar approach every other problem of people in a similar manner and proffer Hindutva as the universal drug.

Thus, it is certainly not the first time that Ambedkar is vilified as being against Muslims. Mr. Vinay Katiyar likewise is not the first person to indulge in this vilification. What made this idiosyncratic remark of Mr. Katiyar noteworthy are the context and the temerity with which he made it in a campaignic mode. Mr. Katiyar could otherwise be taken as singularly unsuited to talk about a person of Ambedkar's stature. Reportedly accused in a rape case and charged by its own Sadhu- Sants for corruption, there might scarcely be a person more incompetent than him to talk about a giant like Babasaheb Ambedkar, least to interpret what he said. But, as Ram Bhaktas are known for monkeying around where devils fear to tread, Mr. Katiyar did it. After all, Mr. Katiyar's pedigree essentially lies in the Bajrang Dal! With confidence becoming only an ignoramus of his ilk, he persisted with his 'scholarly' claim despite the initial criticism that pointed at least at the slippery ground that he stood on.

The context that made it noteworthy was the current anti-Muslim cannibal Hindutva campaign that revealed itself in its first successful experiment in Gujarat, when it devoured and devastated the lives of

thousands of innocent Muslims! The most notable feature of the Gujarat experiment was the participation of the tribals and Dalits. The former were a virgin constituency, and hence did not surprise many, being monopolized by the power-hungry Pariwar in the absence of others. But the Dalits, who are supposed to be living antagonistic contradictions with the caste Hindus that typically constitute Hindutva forces, did surprise and shock people. Notwithstanding the fact that the Gujarati Dalits have largely remained under the paternalistic influence of Gandhism, while Ambedkarian rebellion stirred the consciousness of the entire country, the widespread reservation riots, not many years ago, in which they were brutally battered by these very Hindutva-people, were expected at least, to keep them away from the communal project of Hindutva. It was indeed shocking to find them performing the foot soldiery of the Hindutva brigade in the communal carnage of Muslims that followed.

Overwhelmed by this astonishing feat of Hindutva in Gujarat that culminated into a saffron victory for the BJP in the state elections, the Sangh Pariwar unanimously endorsed the model and swore to replicate it all over the country. Even the Prime Minister, who is expected to respect constitutional constraints, did not hesitate in approving it publicly "if Godhra was to happen again". All the religious minorities, sections of thinking Dalits and entire secular India were benumbed by these pernicious developments. A specter of communal conflagration in too familiar a fascist framework was held in horror before their eyes. Although, the state elections that followed, reassured them about the political prowess of the common people, that it was not as easy as the Sangh Pariwar thought to replicate the Modi- experiment everywhere, the mischief value of this project could not however be ignored. Mr. Katiyar's statement about Ambedkar thus assumed particular importance. It indicated what cooked in the crooked minds of the Hindutva-strategists. Unlike Gujarati Dalits, the Dalits in rest of India assumed the legacy of Babasaheb Ambedkar. In order to recreate the Gujarat-like polarization elsewhere, one necessarily needed to show Ambedkar as anti-Muslims and pro-Hindutva. It particularly applied to UP, as the BSP which ruled that state with the desperate support of the BJP, stood on the plank of Dalit-Muslim support. In view of the

increasing contradictions within the BSP-BJP coalition, the BJP needed to create a contingency-conflagration for preserving its shaky existence.

The second noteworthy feature of this issue was its nationwide projection in the media. Never before was it voiced so brazenly in public. Probably, it suited Mr. Katiyar's casual profile to commit this callous act. It is an established test-marketing methodology of the SP, to test out new ideas for their workability among the public through its various constituents. Whatever it may be, the remark that was made and persisted with so confidently as to appear substantial, would certainly have its impact on the gullible masses unless effectively countered. Mr. Katiyar's canard could not be ignored as an idiosyncrasy of an individual simply because it is not. It is part of a well thought out SP-stratagem to create tension between Dalits and Muslims, to absorb Dalits into the Hindutva-fold, to polarize people into 'us' and 'they'; it is the extension of the infamous Modi-experiment carried out in Gujarat. The SP-strategy always underscored its intention of cooking its bread on the burning pyre of people's bodies!

The immediate rejoinders that came against these sacrilegious remarks were notably from Ms. Mayawati, Chief Minister of UP and Mr. Udit Raj. The latter has been working in UP for some years through his Lord Buddha Club and he recently formed a political party called the Justice Party. Mayawati's remarks basically reflected her anxiety to safeguard her political constituency that gave her 14 Muslim MLAs. She did not provide a convincing counter beyond claiming that none read Ambedkar as much as she did. Udit Raj has certainly been more convincing. But he had a constraint of space and content of a newspaper article. Beyond these apparently Ambedkarite comments, there was one significant rejoinder from Dr. Asghar Ali Engineer, a noted scholar of Islam and commentator on contemporary communalism, that clearly showed how Dr. Ambedkar was not against the Muslims. Besides its scholarship, it incidentally serves as a representative opinion of the Muslim community, that it does not see Dr. Ambedkar the Katiyar way. Many scholars like Gail Omvedt and Kancha Ilaiah also contributed to the refutation of these outrageous remarks. However,

in order to effectively counter Katiyar's contention that claimed to be based on Dr. Ambedkar's book- 'Thoughts on Pakistan' or 'Pakistan or Partition of India' (as it was titled in its second edition), it is imperative that the facts are presented to people in their pristine form, based on his actual writings. In view of the mischievous potential of the lie, it is necessary that it is nailed securely.

While dealing with the current controversy created by Katiyar, I have taken an opportunity to explode all the commonplace myths about Babasaheb Ambedkar being propagated from the Hindutva camp in the following pages. The myths were formulated on the basis of the brainstorming output of some close friends, who are alive to these issues and I believe that they collectively cover all possible lies, confusions and genuine misgivings about Dr. Ambedkar's position on the current communal problems. The format came naturally, as myths are countered only by facts. Although, I had wished to be as brief as possible, I observed this constraint for my own comments, but ignored it when Dr. Ambedkar had to be quoted pertinently. It should be noted that the myths are conceived purely as convenience and not from the exclusivity viewpoint. Hence, the facts given against each necessarily are also not exclusive. Attempt is made to minimize repetition in the text, but the users need not observe this constraint. Lastly, the main objective behind this project is to thwart attempts of the reactionary camp to malign and pollute the ideology of emancipation of the oppressed Indians. As I have always maintained, Ambedkar-thought, as the product of this soil by some one who suffered its problem and sincerely tried to provide a solution, with a universalistic vision, howsoever diffused it may be, essentially constitutes an important part of the ideological repertoire of the revolutionary forces of this country. It needs to be protected with all the zeal and might we can command.

Myth 1
Dr. Ambedkar was against the Muslims

As for Mr. Vinay Katiyar, there is not much that is reported in specific terms in the press in support of his statement that Dr. Ambedkar was against Muslims or "Dr Ambedkar and the Sangh Pariwar had held similar views on cultural nationalism and the Muslims." It is reported that Dr Ambedkar had used the term 'terrorist' for the Muslims in his book on Pakistan. He had also pointed out that the late leader had voiced against the Partition of the country and had objected to the reservation facility for the Muslims in India during the Constituent Assembly sessions.[1]

References to Islam and Muslims in Ambedkar's writings abound from early days. Bahishkrit Bharat, the paper he started in Marathi as the mouthpiece of his movement - Bahishkrit Hitkarini Sabha, had articles on Islam by one Maharashtrian reformer- Lokhitawadi, and these were serialised over a number of issues.[2] If Dr. Ambedkar had been against Islam or Muslims, he would not have spared so much of valuable space of his paper on them. Ambedkar was certainly impressed by the egalitarian principles of Islam and was pained to see it degenerate in India by absorbing evils of native Hinduism. He spoke out against this degeneration at a number of places, but eventually blamed Hinduism for it. Even at the practical level, he tends to praise it for its spirit of

solidarity. He appears overwhelmed by the spirit of cohesiveness among Muslims and tendentiously prefers it for conversion. When he had declared in Yeole in 1935 that he would leave the Hindu fold and accept a new religion before his death, some of his disciples decided to change their religion and approached him. His advice to them was to accept Islam. His Bahishkrit Baharat (15 March 1929) also exhorts people to convert to Islam if they are willing to change their religion. It is only after the in depth studies of various religions vis-à-vis his goals that he decided on Buddha's Dhamma. Thus, it is purely mischievous to say that he was against Muslims.

Muslims occupied a peculiar space in the political sphere in his times. Ever since the British had decided to involve natives in the governance of India, both the major communities, Hindus and Muslims, contended for political power. Both had ruling class aspirations. Muslims had largely been the rulers of the country for nearly eight centuries immediately preceding the British advent and the Hindus, before that. Besides, even after losing political power, the socio-religious hegemony of the Hindus had continued all along. After the initial period of the social reform movement, when he realised that it was not possible to bring about the desired changes in Hindu society through reformist methods, Dr. Ambedkar plunged whole hog into the political movement. It is vital to note that Dr. Ambedkar had to carve out his space between these two contending forces that were battling to maximise their gain in the colonial context and gradually expand it as he progressed. Ambedkar's rise in the political sphere was naturally grudged by the Hindus, as represented by none other than Mahatma Gandhi.

Anxious to regain political power, the attitude of Hindu leadership has been largely accommodative of ever- expanding Muslim demands. If the Muslims thus intended to gain a larger share of the cake than their numbers deserved, it was at the cost of the untouchables. Thus, Ambedkar indirectly found himself pitted against the Muslims in the political parleys of his times. In order to refute the claim of the untouchables, that they were distinct social group from the Hindus, the Hindu leadership was deliberately conceding more space to

Muslims than they deserved. Ambedkar could not take on these intrigues directly. In order to thwart this process in time, he had no recourse but to appeal to the consciousness of the Hindus, essentially playing up the negatives associated with Muslims. It is necessary to read his writings relating to Muslims in this broad situational context. Despite these odds, no one can pick up even a single sentence from his voluminous writings that would indicate that he was in any way against the Muslims, unless of course, he is motivated with a malafide intention like Mr. Katiyar.

Dr. Ambedkar had enough reasons to be annoyed with Muslim leaders (not Muslims) as they were always lukewarm in their support to the cause of the Untouchables. He had a particularly bitter experience with them at the Round Table Conference when despite his overtures for making common cause with the Muslims, they kept themselves aloof. He often found them self-centred, narrow-minded and regressive in their social attitude and unsafe to count on with regard to the demands of the untouchables. As Keer explains, "The Muslims, in their turn were not favouring the untouchables' for they feared that the caste Hindus and the untouchable Hindus would any day become a united force and oppose their demands jointly."[3] Despite these facts, there has not been a single instance of bad blood between him and the Muslims. On the contrary, there are several instances in history that can be recounted to demonstrate these two communities making common cause against the odds of the majority communalism.

When the actual political parleys for the transfer of power commenced, Dr. Ambedkar found himself totally excluded. He was facing a kind of 'political paralysis; his life long efforts appeared to be coming to naught. He was very anxious to create constitutional space for the representation of the Scheduled Castes in the legislature and executive but did not have anybody in the Bombay Assembly to support his candidature to the Constituent Assembly that was being convened. He was very depressed and his health was failing. In such a critical situation, it was the Muslims who came to support him. His name was put up through Mr. Jogendranath Mandal who was a member of Dr. Ambedkar's Scheduled Caste Federation in the Bengal Assembly, and

he was elected to the Constituent Assembly with the support of the Muslim League.

Dr. Ambedkar remained a firm votary of minority rights being made part of the structure of governance. He clearly saw that India's future depended on how well various sections of people are integrated in the national structure. As in the case of Muslims, although he considered it premature for any community to demand separation from the country, as none including India was yet a nation, all the same, as a true democrat, he respected the right of self determination of people. From this perspective, he had supported Muslim demands such as partition of Kashmir and separate electorate for Muslims among others and as per his biographer, paid the price in losing his parliamentary election in January 1952 parliamentary elections to a small time Congress candidate- Shri N. S. Kajrolkar.[4]

Fundamentally, the point in question itself is sacrilegious in the sense that it imputes motives to a person of Dr. Ambedkar's stature. After all, Dr. Ambedkar was not a person who could be prejudiced against some people or community. It is the forte of the Sangh Pariwar that made its raison d'etre to be for and against some people identified along communal lines. It will naturally tend to see everyone in that way. Mr. Katiyar's remarks thus need not be taken as offensive. But one fails to understand, that when his Pariwar is bent upon undoing what Dr. Ambedkar did, as for instance, replacement of the Indian Constitution which is eulogised as Bheemsmruti by the one based on the Manusmriti, as the Pariwar Supremo Mr. Sudershan proclaimed, why Mr. Katiyar invites problems for himself by invoking Dr. Ambedkar. For, Dr. Ambedkar can really embarrass him if his intentions are to seek his support for his communal project. The foregoing may help him to see the truth!

Myth 2
Ambedkar called Muslims Terrorists

As far as Mr. Katiyar's claim that Dr. Ambedkar referred to Muslims as terrorists in his book, 'Pakistan or Partition of India', anyone can easily verify that it is an absolute white lie. The word 'terrorist' occurs in the said book five times in all and none in reference to Muslims (all in a single paragraph)[5]. All the occurrences refer to the 'Terrorists of Bengal' and their party in describing the political parties that contended for political power before the advent of Gandhi. Despite this, Mr. Katiyar has been claiming around that he was quoting from Ambedkar's book and hence there was no question of his retracting anything. Enough for the man and the party that he presides over!

Even if you search on 'terror', in the same book, you would get the following references: The first reference is to Mohammad Ghazni's plans "that would strike terror into the hearts of the Hindus" in the Part II, Hindu case against Pakistan.[6] The second reference is to the creation of four Muslim majority provinces as a system of protection, "in which blast was to be met by counter-blast, terror by terror and tyranny by tyranny.[7] The third reference comes in the same part while explaining how the formation of the Muslim majority states shall be prejudicial to the interests of the Hindu community in the communally charged situation: "To retain the unity of the Punjab and allow the

Muslim majority of 54 p.c. to rule the Hindu minority of 46 p.c. or to redraw the boundaries, to allow the Muslims and the Hindus to be under separate national states, and thus rescue the whole body of Hindus from the terrors of the Muslim rule?"[8] Although, unlike the word 'terrorist' 'terror' occurs in some association with the Muslims, none of the references are used to characterise the Muslim community as terrorist. Mohammad Ghazni cannot represent the Muslim community. The second reference to 'terror' rather connotes terror in the Hindu majority provinces that could be counterbalanced by creating the Muslim majority provinces in the North. The third one is used in a metaphorical sense for emphasising the undesirability of the provincial organisation. It may be possible that Mr. Katiyar reads out from this part, but he forgets that this part is the advocacy Ambedkar does on behalf of the Hindus like him for their case against Pakistan.

There is only one reference in the next Part III of the book, 'What if not Pakistan', and that comes in the context of riots that broke out in the city of Kohat on 9th and 10th September 1924. "As a result of this reign of terror the whole Hindu population evacuated the city of Kohat. After protracted negotiations an agreement of reconciliation was concluded between the two communities."[9] This does refer to the Muslim majority city that unleashed the reign of terror on the minority Hindu community. It may be certainly interpreted by the people of Mr. Katiyar's ilk to be characterizing the Muslims in general. To the misfortune of Mr. Katiyar however, this is the description of riots as "described in the Annual Reports on the affairs of India submitted year by year to Parliament by the Government of India under the old Government of India Act." They are not Dr. Ambedkar's words! It only exposes the character of Mr. Katiyar and his Sangh Pariwar in inventing and spreading falsehoods in the footsteps of their fascist ancestry.

Beyond the book on Pakistan, even if one searches the entire body of Ambedkar-writings, one gets total three references, all in the "Evidence before Joint Committee on Indian Constitutional Reform", and only two attributable to Dr. Ambedkar. The first one is in the section (19) wherein Dr. Ambedkar avers before Mr. J. C. French and Mr. S. H. Mills

who were interviewing him on behalf of Indian Police (statement No. 16,906), "I suppose it is not your suggestion that as it is today there are any Depressed Classes or there are any Mohammedans who are in sympathy with the terrorist movement?" Here 'terrorist' refers to the armed groups of the freedom fighters. It can be easily seen, contrary to the contention of Mr. Katiyar, that Dr. Ambedkar here brackets Muslims with his own people and pleads that they were not even sympathetic to any terrorist groups.

The second reference occurs in response to the comment by Mr. S. H. Mills, immediately following the above statement by Dr. Ambedkar, "We have quite a large number of Depressed Classes who have been arrested as terrorists." Dr. Ambedkar questions the Police (statement No. 16,909), "Now the next point that I want to draw your attention to is this: May I just put it? Is it your experience, for instance, that a large community like the Namasudras in Bengal are in any way connected with the terrorist movement?" It is clear that even here the word terrorist does not refer to the Muslims.

Myth 3
Ambedkar believed in two-nation theory

The two-nation theory is premised on the belief that the Hindus and Muslims are two nations. Babasaheb Ambedkar squarely dismisses this premise of religion-based nationality. He gives his definition of nationality as below: "Nationality is a social feeling. It is a feeling of corporate sentiment of oneness which makes those who are charged with it feel that they are kith and kin. This national feeling is a double- edged feeling. It is at once a feeling of fellowship for one's own kith and kin and an anti-fellowship feeling for those who are not one's own kith and kin. It is a feeling of "consciousness of kind" which on the one hand binds together those who have it, so strongly that it over-rides all differences arising out of economic conflicts or social gradations and, on the other, severs them from those who are not of their kind. It is a longing not to belong to any other group. This is the essence of what is called a nationality and national feeling."[10]

The two nation theory came into being with the declaration by the Muslim League that the Muslims of India were a separate nation. It was constructed as a reaction to the Hindu insistence that India was a nation. This insistence of Hindus stemmed from two reasons according to Dr. Ambedkar. Firstly, since the nationality and nationalism were deemed to be special virtues in people, the Hindus felt ashamed to

admit the lack of it. Secondly, since, by the end of the 19th century, it had become an accepted principle that the people, who constituted a nation, were entitled to self-government; the claim to nationhood had become an imperative for the Hindu politicians in their anxiety to secure self rule.[11] By elaborating the definition of nation, Dr. Ambedkar is clear that India was not a nation. He tends to agree with the people who considered India sans nationality.[12] India potentially had numerous nationalities in germination but none yet fully evolved.

Dr. Ambedkar tends to refute the Hindu argument for repudiating the Muslim claim to Pakistan that since Muslims and Hindus were the same race, spoke the same languages, had many common features in the social and cultural life; they could not be a nation. Dr. Ambedkar considered these factors as inadequate to constitute a nation. Says he, "All this, no doubt, is true. That a large majority of the Muslims belong to the same race as the Hindus is beyond question. That all Mahomedans do not speak a common tongue, that many speak the same language as the Hindus cannot be denied. That there are certain social customs which are common to both cannot be gainsaid. That certain religious rites and practices are common to both is also a matter of fact. But the question is: can all this support the conclusion that the Hindus and the Mahomedans on account of them constitute one nation or these things have fostered in them a feeling that they long to belong to each other?"[13]

He dismisses the Hindu argument about common features between Muslims and Hindus as 'purely mechanical' and not out of a conscious attempt to adopt and adapt to each other's ways and manners to bring about social fusion.[14] He observes that they are partly due to incomplete conversions, ineffectual Muslimization of the converts recruited from various caste and out-caste Hindus.

He observes, "As a matter of historical experience, neither race, nor language, nor country has sufficed to mould a people into a nation."[15] and approvingly quotes Renan in his support. To the question, what constitutes a nation he again borrows words from Renan who said, "A nation is a living soul, a spiritual principle. Two things, which in truth are but one, constitute this soul, this spiritual principle. One is in the

past, the other in the present. .....In the past an inheritance of glory and regrets to be shared, in the future a like ideal to be realised; to have suffered, and rejoiced, and hoped together; all these things are worth more than custom houses in common, and frontiers in accordance with strategical ideas; all these can be understood in spite of diversities of race and language. I said just now, ' to have suffered together' for indeed, suffering in common is a greater bond of union than joy. As regards national memories, mournings are worth more than triumphs; for they impose duties, they demand common effort."[16]

If the Hindus wished to maintain that they and Muslims together form a nation, they must answer the question whether "there is any common historical antecedents which the Hindus and Muslims can be said to share together as matters of pride or as matters of sorrow"[17] His answer to this question is in the negative. In terms of their historical antecedents, they appeared as "two armed battalions warring against each other". He writes, "In depending upon certain common features of Hindu and Mahomedan social life, in relying upon common language, common race and common country, the Hindu is mistaking what is accidental and superficial for what is essential and fundamental. The political and religious antagonisms divide the Hindus and the Musalmans far more deeply than the so-called common things are able to bind them together."[18] After narrating the history of antagonism he concludes, "In the absence of common historical antecedents, the Hindu view that Hindus and Musalmans form one nation falls to the ground. To maintain it is to keep up a hallucination. There is no such longing between the Hindus and Musalmans to belong together as there is among the Musalmans of India."[19]

While demonstrating that the Muslims and Hindus were not a nation, he also dismisses mere religion to be the basis for nationality. He cites examples of how Islam failed to prevent separation of the Arab nation from Turkey or how several nationalities fought against each other despite Christianity being their common religion. The two nation theory that implied the religious basis of nationhood was thus not acceptable to him. It was a misnomer because irrespective of whether Muslims were a nation or not, it assumed the rest of India to be a

nation. It was founded on the wrong notion that nations necessarily warranted self-rule. Even if nationhood was conceded to the Muslims, it did not follow that that they should get their own land. The world is a living exhibition that several nationalities can coexist under one government within a country. Rather, it can be said in reverse that there is not a single example of a country being home to a single nationality. Unless nationality grew into nationalism, the question of separate national existence did not arise.

Dr. Ambedkar distinguishes between nationality and nationalism as two different psychological states of the human mind.[20] "Nationality means "consciousness of kind, awareness of the existence of tie of kinship". Nationalism means "the desire for a separate national existence for those who are bound by this tie of kinship" [21] While it is true that there cannot be nationalism without the feeling of nationality being in existence, the converse is not always true. Nationality can exist without any feeling of nationalism. According to Dr. Ambedkar, for nationality to flame into nationalism, two conditions must exist. "First, there must arise a "will to live as a nation. Nationalism is the dynamic expression of that desire. Secondly, there must be a territory which nationalism could occupy and make it a state, as well as a cultural home of the nation."[22] Without acknowledging that Muslims are a nation, he sees Muslims as developing a "will to live as nation". Dr. Ambedkar tends to see this happening in the Muslims' case at that time.

Dr. Ambedkar illustrates how nationalism has been the major force in history, giving examples of historic decay of the great empire in case of Turkey and destruction of a country in case of Czechoslovakia. Among the many factors that brought about the destruction, Ambedkar highlights the growth of nationalism among the subject people as the major cause. For instance, in the case of Turkey, he says, "The true and the principal cause of the disruption of Turkey was the growth of the spirit of nationalism among its subject peoples. The Greek revolt, the revolts of the Serbs, Bulgarians and other Balkans against the Turkish authority were no doubt represented as a conflict between Christianity and Islam. That is one way of looking at it, but only a superficial way.

These revolts were simply the manifestations of the spirit of nationalism by which they were generated..."[23] While in the case of the Greeks, Serbs, Bulgarians and other Balkans, it appeared to be a conflict between Christianity and Islam, there was no such thing in the case of Arabs. It was just development of Arab nationalism and Arab will to be independent which gave rise to Arab revolt in the last war and brought about the disruption of Turkey....."[24] Similarly, in the case of Czechoslovakia, he locates the chief cause in the intransigent nationalism of the Slovaks. He observes that, contrary to the general impression that the destruction of Czechoslovakia was the result of German aggression, which was rather true to some extent, the major factor responsible for it has been the intransigent nationalism of the Slovaks who were out to break up the unity of the state and secure the independence of Slovakia."[25]

Ambedkar saw this Muslim "will to live as a nation" sprouting from their wounded psyche. In chapter III - Escape from Degradation, Dr. Ambedkar discusses one of the reasons for Pakistan being the Hindu majority treating the Muslims as 'second-class' citizens in India. The experience with the Congress rule had shown that it was not willing to share power with anyone that did not have allegiance to the Congress. They were terribly disillusioned when they found that the constitutional safeguards failed to save them from the tyranny of the Hindu majority. "They felt they had nothing to fear from the Congress and the prospects were that the Congress and the Muslim League would work the constitution in partnership. But, two years and three months of the Congress Government in the Hindu Provinces have completely disillusioned them and have made them the bitterest enemies of the Congress. The Deliverance Day celebration held on the 22nd December 1939 shows the depth of their resentment. What is worse, their bitterness is not confined to the Congress. The Musalmans, who at the Round Table Conference joined in the demand for Swaraj, are today the most ruthless opponents of Swaraj." [26]

Ambedkar dismisses the Congress contention in response to the Muslim grievance that they had done everything possible to advance the interests of the Muslims, as irrelevant. The question he poses

sounds as relevant in today's development paradigm as it was then. Asks he, "Are the Hindus to be a ruling race and the Muslims and other minorities to be subject races under Swaraj? What the ruling community does to the ruled one is utterly irrelevant to the question if minority communities refuse to be treated as subject people."27 Giving an example of colonial rule, he justifies the grudge of the minority people against the ruling community:

"That the ruling community has done good to the ruled is quite beside the point and is no answer to the contention of the minority communities that they refuse to be treated as a subject people. The British have done many good things in India for the Indians. They have improved their roads, constructed canals on more scientific principles, effected their transport by rail, carried their letters by penny post, flashed their messages by lightning, improved their currency, regulated their weights and measures, corrected their notions of geography, astronomy and medicine, and stopped their internal quarrels and effected some advancement in their material conditions. Because of these acts of good government, did anybody ask the Indian people to remain grateful to the British and give up their agitation for self-government? Or because of these acts of social uplift, did the Indians give up their protest against being treated as a subject race by the British? The Indians did nothing of the kind. They refused to be satisfied with these good deeds and continued to agitate for their right to rule themselves."28

Dr. Ambedkar acknowledges the grievance of the Muslims and accuses the Hindus (Congress) of aggravating it and impelling them to demand separation. He writes "Exclusion from political power is the essence of the distinction between a ruling race and a subject race; and inasmuch as the Congress maintained this principle, it must be said that this distinction was enforced by the Congress while it was in the saddle. The Musalmans may well complain that they have already suffered enough and that this reduction to the position of a subject race is like the proverbial last straw. Their decline and fall in India began ever since the British occupation of the country. Every change, executive, administrative, or legal, introduced by the British, has inflicted a series of blows upon the Muslim Community."29

The two- nation idea was first propounded by Savarkar in his presidential speech from the Hindu Mahasabha platform in December 1939. Jinnah's formal adoption of the two-nation theory came soon after this and is simply the other side of the coin. Dr. Ambedkar finds it strange that "Savarkar and Jinnah instead of being opposed to each other on the one nation versus two nation issue are in complete agreement about it. Both agree, not only agree but insist that there are two nations in India - one the Muslim nation and the other the Hindu nation. They differ only as regards the terms and conditions on which the two nations should live."[30] While Jinnah wanted India to be cut up into two, Pakistan for the Muslim nation and Hindustan for the Hindu nation "Mr. Savarkar on the other hand insists that, although there are two nations in India, India shall not be divided into two parts, one for Muslims and the other for the Hindus ; that the two nations shall dwell in one country and shall live under the mantle of one single constitution; that the constitution shall be such that the Hindu nation will be enabled to occupy a predominant position that is due to it and the Muslim nation made to live in the position of subordinate co-operation with the Hindu nation."[31] Needless to point out, this position of Savarkar represents typically the Hindutva position even today, nearly six decades after the partition.

Dr. Ambedkar praises Savarkar's Hindutva alternative for its frankness, boldness and definiteness that distinguished it from the irregularity, vagueness and indefiniteness which characterized the Congress declarations about minority rights. The Hindutva scheme is open in telling the Muslims, "thus far and no further"; they know definitely what is in store for them in the Hindu Rashtra. However, he finds Mr. Savarkar's attitude "illogical, if not queer" in admitting a separate nationhood for Muslims and conceding them a right to cultural autonomy and even a national flag but denying them a separate national home. Dr. Ambedkar asks, "If he (Savarkar) claims a national home for the Hindu nation, how can he refuse the claim of the Muslim nation for a national home?"[32]

He points out beyond the fault of inconsistency in the stand of Savarkar that the scheme being advocated by Mr. Savarkar "is really creating a

most dangerous situation for the safety and security of India."[33] He says, "One can understand and even appreciate the wisdom of the theory of suppression of the minor nation by the major nation because the ultimate aim is to bring into being one nation. But one cannot follow what advantage a theory has which says that there must ever be two nations but that there shall be no divorce between them. One can justify this attitude only if the two nations were to live as partners in friendly intercourse with mutual respect and accord. But that is not to be, because Mr. Savarkar will not allow the Muslim nation to be co-equal in authority with the Hindu nation. He wants the Hindu nation to be the dominant nation and the Muslim nation to be the servient nation. Why Mr. Savarkar, after sowing this seed of enmity between the Hindu nation and the Muslim nation should want that they should live under one constitution and occupy one country, is difficult to explain."[34]

Dr. Ambedkar even denies Mr. Savarkar any credit for originality, as he finds his scheme modelled on old Austria and Turkey wherein the major nation was juxtaposed to other minor nations within one constitution, with the major nation dominating the minor nations. He reminds Savarkar that his models have since been blown up. It is better the Hindutva forces read Dr. Ambedkar's own words:

"That Mr. Savarkar should have taken old Austria and old Turkey as his model to build upon is really very strange. Mr. Savarkar does not seem to be aware of the fact that old Austria and old Turkey are no more. Much less does he seem to know the forces which have blown up old Austria and old Turkey to bits. If Mr. Savarkar instead of studying the past-of which he is very fond-were to devote more attention to the present, he would have learnt that old Austria and old Turkey came to ruination for insisting upon maintaining the very scheme of things which Mr. Savarkar has been advising his "Hindudom "to adopt, namely, to establish a Swaraj in which there will be two nations under the mantle of one single constitution in which the major nation will be allowed to hold the minor nation in subordination to itself.[35]

Can there be more damaging comment on the Hindutva scheme than the following words of Dr. Ambedkar, "Suffice it to say that the scheme

of Swaraj formulated by Mr. Savarkar will give the Hindus an empire over the Muslims and thereby satisfy their vanity and their pride in being an imperial race. But it can never ensure a stable and peaceful future for the Hindus (read India), for the simple reason that the Muslims will never yield willing obedience to so dreadful an alternative.[36] Amazing, we still find the Hindutva cohorts telling us that he was their supporter!

As against the two nation theories zealously propagated by the communalists on both sides, Dr. Ambedkar still sounds optimistic at the fag end of the book when he writes, "There is much in the Musalmans which, if they wish, can roll them into a nation. But isn't there enough that is common to both Hindus and Musalmans, which if developed, is capable of moulding them into one people? Nobody can deny that there are many modes, manners, rites and customs which are common to both. Nobody can deny that there are rites, customs and usages based on religion which do divide Hindus and Musalmans. The question is which of these should be emphasized. If the emphasis is laid on things that are common, there need be no two nations in India. If the emphasis is laid on points of difference, it will no doubt give rise to two nations.[37]

The above amply proves that far from agreeing with the two nation theory of Savarkar and Jinnah, Ambedkar refused to take the Hindus or Muslims as nations. He dismisses the racial or the cultural theory of nations and treats the nation as a "corporate sentiment" a "consciousness of kind" that develops in people by living together with mutual reliance, sans discrimination, and anxiety. Obviously, the constituents of this consciousness could encompass the integral living of people beyond race, religion, caste, creed, language and culture. He does argue that Muslims as perhaps many other minorities including the Dalits had sufficient raw material to develop into a nation. But, none of them, including the Hindus, were yet a nation. He puts the responsibility squarely on the attitude of the majority community; if it adopts the imperial big-brotherly attitude, it will catalyse not only many nations in India but even impel them to develop nationalisms. He recounts the unjust treatment meted out to Muslims

by the Hindu ruling class being responsible for their 'wounded psyche' germinating a "will to live as a nation".

Myth 4
Ambedkar believed in cultural nationalism

As we know, cultural nationalism is just a euphemism for Hindu nationalism or still better Brahmanic nationalism. Like any other term in the Hindutva phrase book, it is hegemonic in its conception and slippery in its meaning. If we go by the established concepts of culture and nationalism, the joint venture of these terms, poses a kind of problematic. Culture, as we know is a way of life and is something very different from politics and economics. It constitutes a continuum from the olden times, like a stream of river, assimilating things in its course and flowing perennially. Culture is continuous; it transgresses the dimension of geographical space and time. Nationalism is a product of a definite stage of development of society and its political and economic aspects take concrete shape in that particular period, drawing a demarcating line from the past socio-economic systems. If we superimpose Hindutva's revivalist Treta Yug-type cultural notion on this unity, the problematic becomes further confounding. In a way, this is the common feature one experiences with the lexicon of Sangh Pariwar and therefore one necessarily needs to understand it from their own explanation. Before we proceed to examine Dr. Ambedkar's position vis-à-vis Hindutva's cultural nationalism, we should try to briefly establish what exactly it means.

The essence of cultural nationalism has been interpreted in the BJP manifesto as "one nation, one people, one culture". BJP's election manifesto says that "our nationalist vision is not merely bound by geographical or political identity of Bharat but it is referred by our timeless cultural heritage". It further says that "this cultural heritage which is central to all regions, religions and languages, is a civilisational identity and constitutes the cultural nationalism of India, which is the core of Hindutva". It says that "Sanatana Dharma" is synonymous with Indian nationalism. BJP considers cultural nationalism as an integrative idea and proudly presents to us its practical application in its Ram Janmabhoomi movement. It says, "It is with such integrative (sic!) ideas in mind, the BJP joined the Ram Janmabhoomi movement ... the greatest mass movement in post-independence history... which reoriented the disoriented polity in India and strengthened the foundation of cultural nationalism". BJP further asserts that "Ram lies at the core of Indian consciousness".

What would Dr. Ambedkar say about this kind of cultural nationalism? In one sentence this construction can be defined as an ideological offensive against Ambedkarian weltanschauung that has argued that India is a confederation of nations and cultures and has vehemently asserted its disgust with its orthodox Brahmanic contrivance, which Hindutva eulogizes as its great cultural heritage. Take for instance "one nation, one people, one culture", that supposedly constitutes the essence of cultural nationalism. Notwithstanding the fact that it resonates the Hitlerite Nazi slogan "Ein volk, ein Reich, ein Fuehrer' and could hence be reprehensible to that great liberal democrat, Dr. Ambedkar had specifically ridiculed its progenitor- Mr. Savarkar, when he put forth this schema as his alternate vision to Pakistan. Dr. Ambedkar writes, "...the rule of the game, which Mr. Savarkar prescribes, is to be one man one vote, be the man Hindu or Muslim. In his scheme a Muslim is to have no advantage which a Hindu does not have. Minority is to be no justification for privilege and majority is to be no ground for penalty."[38] He sarcastically praises this scheme for its frankness (brazenness) which will let the Muslims know "where they are with regard to Hindu Maha Sabha".[39] By pointing out the fate of Austria and Turkey that had followed similar schema in history, he

had warned that such an imperialist approach will invite doom for the country.[40]

"Ram lies at the core of Indian consciousness"-says the cultural nationalism discourse of BJP! But Dr. Ambedkar writes Riddle of Rama and Krishna in his book 'Riddles of Hinduism! While explaining the purpose behind the book in the introduction he wrote, "...I want to make people aware that Hindu religion is not Sanatan (eternal)...the second purpose of the book is to draw the attention of Hindu masses to the devices of Brahmins and make them think for themselves how they have been deceived and misguided by Brahmins"41 Rama, who kills Shambuka, a Shudra, just because he committed a crime of transcending his caste, is said to be the conscience of India, of which the majority is still constituted by the Shudras and the Dalits. Dr. Ambedkar wonders why Valmiki had to write the Ramayana to depict such an amoral, characterless, reactionary, unjust and casteist person as a hero. Dr. Ambedkar's Riddles is fraught with narratives which certainly do not augur well for the Hindutva ideologists. It had provided even the 'proof of the pudding', in the sense that despite being politically risky, the Hindutva forces had come up in arms against him for banning the book. The Sangh Pariwar proudly describes its Ram Janmabhoomi movement that has been responsible for the slaughter of thousands of lives and destruction of faith of millions in the innate goodness of Indians over the last decade, as having strengthened the foundation of cultural nationalism. Can Dr. Ambedkar be imagined to support this cruel cultural nationalism? This movement has destroyed the liberal and secular fabric of Indian constitutionalism that he had labouriously woven along with others. And still he is painted as the supporter of this vile creed! Do they not know that Ambedkar just despised their sanatana dharma, sanatan sanskruti? A modern rationalist, even in his attire, in his life style, and in his body language Dr. Ambedkar stood as a rock like opposition to everything that could be bracketed under 'Sanatan'!

The Vedas as 'sanatan' treasures constitute a core of cultural nationalism. The Hindutva forces proudly claim them as the oldest books in the world, which still possess all the knowledge in the universe.

The claims often transcend the limits of ridiculousness but then, when did the Sangh Pariwar abide by rules of rationality? The current fad about Vedic mathematics is one such. What has Dr. Ambedkar got to say about these venerable resources of cultural nationalism? He writes, "Now the Brahmins have left no room for doubt for they have propounded a most mischievous dogma which the Brahmins have spread amongst the masses, is the dogma of infallibility of Vedas. If Hindu intellect has ceased to grow and if Hindu civilization and culture has become stagnant and a stinking pool, this dogma must be destroyed root and branch if India is to progress. The Vedas are a worthless set of books. There is no reason either to call them sacred or infallible. The Brahmins have invested it with sanctity and infallibility only because by a later interpolation of what is called Purusha-Sukta, the Vedas have made them the Lords of the earth."[42]

With regard to nationalism, as we have seen above, Dr. Ambedkar clearly defines nation, nationality and nationalism in terms of corporate sentiment, psychological feeling, the causes for which may lie in myriad factors. Culture could only be one of them. In his celebrated essay 'Castes in India', he vividly describes the cultural unity of India: "there is no country that can rival the Indian peninsula with respect to the unity of its culture. It has not only a geographic unity, but it has over and above all a deeper and a much more fundamental unity-the indubitable cultural unity that covers the land from end to end." But he immediately problematises the existence of castes in this seeming "homogeneity". He observes that "Caste is a parcelling of an already homogeneous unit". The cultural unity or homogeneity of India thus automatically gets fragmented asunder and loses its meaning insofar as germination of that psychological feeling of oneness which is what nation is all about.[43]

In his 'Annihilation of Castes', he explores "the essentials which go to make up a society" and observes that essential in "being in communication with one another". It is important to note that he clearly dismisses culture to be the essential factor in formation of a society. For instance, he writes, "Men do not become a society by living in physical proximity any more than a man ceases to be a member of

his society by living so many miles away from other men. Secondly similarity in habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts is not enough to constitute men into society. Things may be passed physically from one to another like bricks. In the same way, habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts of one group may be taken over by another group and there may thus appear a similarity between the two. Culture spreads by diffusion and that is why one finds similarity between various primitive tribes in the matter of their habits and customs, beliefs and thoughts, although they do not live in proximity. But no one could say that because there was this similarity the primitive tribes constituted one society. This is because similarity in certain things is not enough to constitute a society."[44]

While answering what constitutes a society, he certainly points out that despite cultural commonality in India; castes become a barrier in developing an Indian society. The use of society here is quite akin to a nation. He writes, "Men constitute a society because they have things which they possess in common. To have similar things is totally different from possessing things in common. And the only way by which men can come to possess things in common with one another is by being in communication with one another. This is merely another way of saying that Society continues to exist by communication - indeed, in communication. To make it concrete, it is not enough if men act in a way which agrees with the acts of others. Parallel activity, even if similar, is not sufficient to bind men into a society. This is proved by the fact that the festivals observed by the different castes amongst the Hindus are the same. Yet these parallel performances of similar festivals by the different castes have not bound them into one integral whole. For that purpose what is necessary is for a man to share and participate in a common activity, so that the same emotions are aroused in him that animate the others. Making the individual a sharer or partner in the associated activity so that he feels its success as his success, its failure as his failure is the real thing that binds men and makes a society of them. The Caste System prevents common activity and by preventing common activity it has prevented the Hindus from becoming a society with a unified life and a consciousness of its own being."45 At another place in the same book, Dr Ambedkar criticizes

the commonplace pride of the Hindus articulated by Prof. Radhakrishnan in his "The Hindu View of Life" that the Hindu civilization has survived unbroken for the last 4000 years despite the intrusion of foreign powers and proselytizing faiths. He punctures that pride saying that the fact of survival is not a proof of fitness to survive. As for the Hindutva protagonists who tend to glorify, albeit certainly falsely, the Hindu civilization and culture as the oldest one and lately misappropriate Dr. Ambedkar within their fold, his views on them must come like a hard whip: "It is useless for a Hindu to take comfort in the fact that he and his people have survived. What he must consider is what is the quality of their survival. If he does that, I am sure he will cease to take pride in the mere fact of survival. A Hindu's life has been a life of continuous defeat and what appears to him to be life everlasting is not living everlastingly but is really a life which is perishing everlastingly. It is a mode of survival of which every right-minded Hindu, who is not afraid to own up the truth, will feel ashamed."[46]

While acknowledging commonality of culture in the Indian peninsula in his early writings like 'Caste in India', he later comes to dispute even that premise: "In the first place, it must be recognized that there has never been such as a common Indian culture, that historically there have been three Indias, Brahmanic India, Buddhist India and Hindu India, each with its own culture. Secondly it must be recognized that the history of India before the Muslim invasions is the history of a mortal conflict between Brahmanism and Buddhism. Anyone who does not recognize these two facts will never be able to write a true history of India, a history which will disclose the meaning and purpose running through it."[47] One can extend the argument and say that there is nothing like Indian culture; there have been many cultures of Indian people. The superficial commonality in the way of life across religious communities and castes cannot be construed as common culture. This commonality only denotes the hegemonic influence of the Hindu culture and if one scratched the surface one can easily find antagonistic cultural layers beneath, at least, in the case of all the Dalit and lower Shudra castes.

As to the question of whether Dr. Ambedkar believed in cultural nationalism of India, as propagated by the Hindutva brigade, the answer must be more than clear to anybody. Ambedkar severely refuted culture to be the viable basis for formation of a nation. Whether India is granted cultural commonality or not, he would not take it as a nation. Referring to the orthodox Hindus of his times and the political class that is being represented by the Hindutva forces today, as claiming India to be a nation, Dr. Ambedkar ridicules them by observing that "considering India as a nation is really cherishing a delusion". Historically, these people have been cherishing the delusion of the Indian nation by ignoring the existence of castes. Dr. Ambedkar's observation thus applies in toto to the Hindutva forces of our days as they did in his times:

"But why talk about the orthodox Hindus?. There are of course Indians both politicians and historians who vehemently deny that the Caste system comes in the way of nationalism. They presume that India is a nation and feel very much offended if anybody instead of speaking of the Indian Nation speaks of the people of India. This attitude is quite understandable. Most of the politicians and historians are Brahmins and cannot be expected to have the courage to expose the misdeeds of their ancestors or admit the evils perpetrated by them. Ask any one the question, is India a nation, and all in a chorus say, 'yes'. Ask for reasons, they will say that India is a nation firstly because India has a geographical unity of the country and secondly because of the fundamental unity of the culture. All this may be admitted for the sake of argument and yet it is true to say that to draw an inference from these facts that India is a nation is really to cherish a delusion. For what is a nation? A nation is not a country in the physical sense of the country whatever degree of geographical unity it may posses. A nation is not people synthesized by a common culture derived from common language, common religion or common race."[48]

Again he makes himself explicit on the question of cultural nationalism: "There may be geographical unity and yet there may be no "longing to belong". There may be no geographical unity and yet the feeling of longing to belong may be very intense. There may be

cultural unity and yet there may be no longing to belong. There may be economical conflicts and class divisions and yet there may be an intense feeling of longing to belong. The point is that nationality is not primarily a matter of geography culture or....."[49]

Lastly, while describing the life of untouchables who follow the same culture as the caste Hindus, he illustrates how all this does not help them in being in community with the caste Hindus. There is practically no communication between the untouchables and the caste Hindus. In such a situation, the talk of cultural nationalism can only serve the Goebbelesque designs of the Sangh Pariwar! Dr. Ambedkar writes, "Like the Criminal Tribes the Untouchables also live in the midst of civilized Hindu Society and possess a degree of culture and morality which completely separate them from the Primitive Tribes and the Criminal Tribes. The Untouchables have the culture of the Hindu Community. They observe the religious rites of the Hindu Community. They recognise the sacred as well as the secular laws of the Hindus. They celebrate the Hindu festivities. But they derive no benefit from this. On the contrary they are segregated and shunned because their physical contact is held by the Hindus to cause pollution. There is therefore an interdict on all social intercourse with them except for unavoidable purposes. They live on the outskirts of a village and not in the midst of it. Every village has its Untouchable quarters; they are attached to the village but are not a part of the village. Segregated from the rest of the Hindu population they are bound down to a code of behaviour, which is appropriate to a servile state."[50]

As a matter of fact, the premise behind cultural nationalism that it is sourced from the ancient traditions of India itself could be faulted. Extending the arguments of Dr. Ambedkar, one would rightly question what India is and what an Indian is in this formulation. Cultural sources of a nation do not necessarily lie in a given geographical domain. In fact, history from the very beginning has witnessed great transmigrations throughout the globe and no nation, which has entered the modern world, can claim exclusivity, no one can claim that the elements of their present-day culture are indigenous in the sense that they originated in their soil. When the Sangh Pariwar claims

exclusivity of Indian culture to base their brand of cultural nationalism, then they must explain as to what is exclusively Indian. If we take a keen look at our cultural resource we see contributions of many outside cultures. Our scripts, art forms, academies, sculpture, dances, dishes, music, language, dress, and practically everything has its origin in lands other than this subcontinent. Cultural elements from Assyrian and Phoenician, Greek, Roman and Persian, Shakas of the Middle East, Turkish-Chinese Kushanas, Ahirs and Gurjars, Afghans and Arabs, and lastly Mughals, have all, in the course of our history, got so inseparably ingrained in our culture that without them, Indian culture is unimaginable. When the Sangh Pariwar tries to monopolize this timeless cultural heritage to their 'Sanatan Dharma', so as to look exclusively Indian, the entire superstructure of their cultural nationalism becomes untenable.

To sum up, Dr. Ambedkar is vehemently opposed even to the construct of cultural nationalism, not to talk of its operational version. He summarily rejects extravagant claims of the Sangh Pariwar that there is a culture that is exclusively Indian which is sourced from the sanatan dharma. Cultural nationalism that treats religions and customs originating in other geographical territories as alien, is exclusivist, reactionary and fascist ideology and he could never approve of it. He saw, at one level of discussion, cultural commonality existing in the sub continent but at another, rejected it, seeing in the belly of history, not one but multiple Indias. Likewise, as seen above, he rejected the notion that nationalism could be based on religion, culture, ethnicity, language etc. For him, it is a modern concept that depends upon the socio-economic system which inspires confidence in people and thereby engenders a corporate sense of belonging together. As for its inhuman operational version, it is antithetical to what he stood for.

Myth 5
Ambedkar considered Muslims as Vandals

Even before he formally embraced Buddhism, Ambedkar was emotionally attached to it. The likes and dislikes germinate normally in the soil of emotions. It will therefore be pertinent to examine his writings when he deals with the emotional issue of destruction of Buddhism.

Dr. Ambedkar writes about it in his "Revolution and Counter-Revolution in Ancient India", (Chapter 5, The Decline and Fall of Buddhism). He notes that antagonism between Brahmanism and Buddhism dated back to the time of the birth of the latter, certainly to the time of its ascendancy. Although this antagonism had turned bloody since the days of Pushyamitra Sung, the fact remains that Buddhism had still thrived and even in the phase of its decline, at the time of Muslim invasions was a major religion in India. The final blow, even in India, was cast by the Muslim invaders. Much before this happened, the Muslims had destroyed it in other countries. Before the advent of Islam, Buddhism had become a dominant religion in Asia and the surrounding countries and had to be confronted by the new faith of Islam. Buddhism is marked by Viharas (monasteries) and numerous idols of Buddha all over the area of its influence, which needed to be destroyed. Ambedkar sees the anti-idolatry of Islam

stemming from this confrontation with Buddhism, as indicated by the word But for idol in Arabic which is a corruption of Buddha. Says he, "There can be no doubt that the fall of Buddhism in India was due to the invasions of the Musalmans. Islam came out as the enemy of the 'But'. The word 'But' as everybody knows is an Arabic word and means an idol. Not many people however know what the derivation of the word 'But' is the Arabic corruption of Buddha. Thus the origin of the word indicates that in the Moslem mind idol worship had come to be identified with the Religion of the Buddha. To the Muslims, they were one and the same thing. The mission to break the idols thus became the mission to destroy Buddhism. Islam destroyed Buddhism not only in India but wherever it went.[51]

"Not all will be satisfied with this explanation. It does seem inadequate. Islam attacked both, Brahmanism and Buddhism. It will be asked why should one survive and the other perish. The argument is plausible but not destructive of the validity of the thesis. To admit that Brahmanism survived, it does not mean that the fall of Buddhism was not due to the sword of Islam. All that it means is that, there were circumstances which made it possible for Brahmanism and impossible for Buddhism to survive the onslaught of Islam. Fortunately for Brahmanism and unfortunately for Buddhism that was the fact."[52]

"Before Islam came into being Buddhism was the religion of Bactria, Parthia, Afghanistan, Gandhar and Chinese Turkestan, as it was of the whole of Asia In all these countries Islam destroyed Buddhism."[53]

"Such was the slaughter of the Buddhist priesthood perpetrated by the Islamic invaders. The axe was struck at the very root. For by killing the Buddhist priesthood Islam killed Buddhism. This was the greatest disaster that befell the religion of Buddha in India."[54]

Such passages could be easily picked up by the Hindutvawadis to project Ambedkar's hatred towards Islam and Muslims. Because, everyone knew in what great esteem and reverence he held Buddha and Buddhism. Fortunately, they have not yet gone as deep to notice them and are still currently testing the waters through the ignoramuses of Katariya's ilk. While Ambedkar presents the above historical facts in very

plausible terms, as though he himself was contending them, he immediately comes out with what he feels about it. He observes that he is not in agreement with the one- sided presentation that India was devastated by the Muslim invasions. Not only has he pointed out the mischief in characterizing these invasions by Arabs, Turks, Mongols and Afghans as Muslim invasions, which in fact were the battles for supremacy among these dynasties, he also shows that the Brahmanic attacks on Buddhism were so violent and vicious that the Muslim attacks could be taken as 'superficial and ephemeral'. Here is his original passage:

"From the point of view of the permanent effect on the social and spiritual life of the people, the Brahmanic invasions of Buddhist India have been so profound in their effect that compared to them, the effect of Muslim invasions on Hindu India have been really superficial and ephemeral. The Muslim invaders destroyed only the outward symbols of Hindu religion such as temples and Maths etc. They did not extirpate Hinduism nor did they cause any subversion of the principles or doctrines which governed the spiritual life of the people. The effects of the Brahmanic invasions were a thorough-going change in the principles which Buddhism had preached for a century as true and eternal principles of spiritual life and which had been accepted and followed by the masses as the way of life. To alter the metaphor the Muslim invaders only stirred the waters in the bath and that too only for a while. Thereafter they got tired of stirring and left the waters with the sediments to settle. They never threw the baby-if one can speak of the principles of Hinduism as a baby-out of the bath. Brahmanism in its conflict with Buddhism made a clean sweep. It emptied the bath with the Buddhist Baby in it and filled the bath with its own waters and placed in it its own baby."[55]

The Hindutwawadis characterize the invasions of medieval times as Muslim invasions with an unhistorical broad-brush, as though they were influenced by only religious motives. Dr. Ambedkar emphatically disapproves this motivated characterization and rightly observes that "The Musalman invaders of Hindu India fought among themselves for their dynastic ambitions. The Arabs, Turks, Mongols and Afghans

fought for supremacy among themselves."[56]

While all these Muslim invaders were inspired by the religious duty to destroy idolatry and the polytheism of Hindu faith, Dr. Ambedkar reminds us that these invasions were as much invasions of India as they were wars among the Muslims themselves. The Hindutva forces revel in lumping them together as Muslims without distinction. "But as a matter of fact, they were Tartars, Afghans and Mongols. Muhammad of Ghazni was a Tartar, Mahommed of Ghori was an Afghan, Taimur was a Mongol, Babar was a Tartar, while Nadirshah and Ahmadshah Abdalli were Afghans. In invading India, the Afghan was out to destroy the Tartar and the Mongol was out to destroy the Tartar as well as the Afghan. They were not a loving family cemented by the feeling of Islamic brotherhood. They were deadly rivals of one another and their wars were often wars of mutual extermination."[57]

Even while dealing with the most emotional issue of destruction of Buddhism by the Muslim invaders, Ambedkar does not show a slightest trace of anti-Muslim feeling. If at all, he reflects anti-Brahmanic feeling because the devastation that Brahmanism caused to Buddhism was far worse than all the destruction caused by the Muslim invaders. It is important to note that he even refuses to characterize all these invasions as Muslim invasions.

Myth 6
Ambedkar's 'Pakistan or Partition of India' is an anti-Muslim text

The single biggest source for the references to Muslims from among the writings and speeches of Babasaheb Ambedkar is his book "Pakistan or The Partition of India". This book deals with a live contemporary issue and seeks to help the country to arrive at a rational decision with regard to Muslim demand for the partition of India. Since the discussion of this issue essentially involved the historical contradictions between Hindus and Muslims as its context and inevitably brought in the discussions specific character of each of these communities; it provides a lot of scope to mischievous minds to indulge in malafide misinterpretation. Since in the current controversy Shri Vinay Katiyar also apparently relied on this book, it will be pertinent to see its context and construction.

This book is acknowledged as an outstanding study of the contemporary and most vexatious issue of the partition of India. It is said to have proved as a reference book for both sides- Hindus as well as Muslims, indeed for all involved in the resolution of this problem, but was never accused of any bias. The format adopted for writing this book comprised identification of an issue, weaving arguments for and against around it and presenting their objective evaluation at the end. The arguments are presented, standing in shoes of the contending

parties- Hindus and Muslims- much beyond what they themselves would have managed to do. They were intended not only to be as comprehensive as possible, but also considerable and plausible, for which Dr. Ambedkar provides due reinforcements with relevant quotes of scholars. As this runs over several pages, the reader, particularly if he wants to make a quick job of it, can easily get swayed in believing everything in the book to be the opinion of the author. This being the case, a motivated person, such as belonging to the Sangh Pariwar, can easily get off twisting the text to his dishonest purpose. This is what Mr. Vinay Katiyar appears to be doing in projecting Ambedkar to be anti-Muslim or pro-Hindutva.

As the broad argument of the book goes, it remains a fact that far from being anti-Muslim, Ambedkar upholds the Muslim case for Pakistan as against the Hindutva case for Akhand Bharat. He employs several arguments based on religion, history, social, political, administration and military, to show how in the prevailing circumstances, the partition, as he proposed, would be the best solution. In order to be comprehensive, the text objectively presents the good and bad points of both sides. But the underscoring point in the book that the inevitability of partition is driven by the intrinsic inability of the Hindu majority to share power with minorities cannot be missed. Partition, in that sense, is seen as a solution facilitating separation from the oppressive Hindu community rule. There are several strictures against the Hindus that they are incapable of seeing the minority-aspirations and giving them their due share in power. He does not therefore find anything outrageous in Muslim demand for Pakistan. He ridicules attempts of the Hindus to claim India as a nation to counter the Muslim claim to nationality. Even he tends go beyond the Muslim viewpoint that since they were a separate nation they wanted Pakistan, arguing that it is not nationality but nationalism, a will to live as a nation in a territory that is sprouting in Muslims that justifies their case for Pakistan.

One pities the Hindutva attempts in pointing few black stains on Muslim face in the mirror of this text, forgetting to look at their own blackened face that the mirror holds forth!

Myth 7
Ambedkar thought Muslims always sang hymn of hate for Hindu and India.

Ambedkar copiously quotes from the historical accounts to show how the Muslim invaders had indulged in forcible circumcision of Brahmins, conversion of Hindus, spoliation of property, slaughter of people, enslavement and abasement of men, women and children, desecration and destruction of temples, etc. The account is horrific enough to germinate hatred for those invaders. But, can these facts be construed as his opposition to much less hatred for the Muslims? He presents a problematic in ignoring the long historical distance of "762 years which elapsed between the advent of Muhammad of Ghazni and the return of Ahmadshah Abdalli."[58] to emphasize the ill will it has created among these two communities. What Ambedkar is arguing about is the devastation and atrocities that the Muslims invaders unleashed in the Northern provinces, have created psychological rift between Hindus and Muslims and made these provinces culturally different from the rest of India. He is in no way attributing these characteristics even to the then Muslim population, not to talk of the contemporary generations of Muslims. Rather, he cautions very pertinently that despite all the invaders being Muslims and variously inspired by the religious zeal to destroy the idolatry and polytheism of Hindus and convert infidels into Islam, they should not be lumped together under a Muslim identity for their invasions were as much the

internecine wars among themselves as they were invasions of India.

The historical narratives of atrocities perpetrated by the Muslim invaders in the text of Pakistan are rather picked up by today's rabid Hindutva for constructing their revenge against Muslims masses. The destruction of Sind by Mohammed Bin Qasim some 1300 years ago or by Mohammed Ghazni some 1000 years ago are sought to be avenged by mass destruction of Muslim places of worship and physical extermination of the entire Muslim community. History embodies a lot of barbarism, not to incite us and repeat it but to teach us lessons and desist from it. If one goes back to the Aryan invasions, history does insinuate similar destruction of everything that was indigenous. Should we therefore identify Aryans and seek their destruction. Hindutva on one hand claims to avenge the atrocities and destructions caused by the Muslim invaders; they take pride in claiming their Aryan lineage. Remember Lokmanya Tilak, who did not mind going to ridiculous length in putting forth the racial theory that Aryans came from Arctic region and were the superior race. The entire Hindutva brigade more or less believes in the superiority of Aryans although as a political imperative they have recently rejected the theory of Tilak for indigenising the Aryans. If the misdeeds of Aryans can be ignored, as they ought to be, then why should we recount the misdeeds of barbaric Muslim hordes that invaded India and unleashed atrocities in the name of religion? Most importantly, how can we attribute their crime to the present generation of Muslims particularly after knowing that most of them might have been their victims? Even if they have converted to Islam by their volition, how can the crime of the original invaders be heaped upon them.

Dr. Ambedkar agrees that "The methods adopted by the invaders have left behind them their aftermath. One aftermath is the bitterness between the Hindus and the Muslims which they have caused. This bitterness, between the two, is so deep-seated that a century of political life has neither succeeded in assuaging it, nor in making people forget it. As the invasions were accompanied with destruction of temples and forced conversions, with spoliation of property, with slaughter,, enslavement and abasement of men, women and children, what wonder

if the memory of these invasions has ever remained green, as a source of pride to the Muslims and as a source of shame to the Hindus?"[59] However, far from seeing these invaders as perpetual Hindu-haters, he acknowledges their positive contribution in planting 'the seed of Islam' in northern India. This lone passage could be good enough to demolish entire Hindutva-tirade attempting to paint Dr. Ambedkar as anti-Muslim: "The Muslim invaders, no doubt, came to India singing a hymn of hate against the Hindus. But, they did not merely sing their hymn of hate and go back burning a few temples on the way. That would have been a blessing. They were not content with so negative a result. They did a positive act, namely, to plant the seed of Islam. The growth of this plant is remarkable. It is not a summer sapling. It is as great and as strong as an oak. Its growth is the thickest in Northern India. The successive invasions have deposited their 'silt' more there than anywhere else, and have served as watering exercises of devoted gardeners. Its growth is so thick in Northern India that the remnants of Hindu and Buddhist culture are just shrubs."[60]

Myth 8
Ambedkar believed that Hindus and Muslims cannot co-exist peacefully

Having worked over more than 300 pages of Pakistan or Partition of India and appeared to have established desirability of partition, Dr. Ambedkar in his characteristic style poses a volley of questions in the last part of the book that goes on refuting some of the arguments that he himself proffered with his scholarly exposition and lawyerly erudition. He counters the argument for Pakistan on the basis of communal antagonism between the Hindus and the Muslims. While not disagreeing with the communal divide that exists between the two communities, he presents the examples of Canada and South Africa where similarly placed antagonistic communities as the Muslims and the Hindus lived amicably under a single Constitution. He writes "Obviously India is not the only place where there is communal antagonism. If communal antagonism does not come in the way of the French in Canada living in political unity with the English, if it does not come in the way of the English in South Africa living in political unity with the Dutch, if it does not come in the way of the French and the Italians in Switzerland living in political unity with the Germans why then should it be impossible for the Hindus and the Muslims to agree to live together under one constitution in India?"[61]

He also dismisses the argument for Pakistan on the excuse that the

Muslims have lost faith in the Congress majority. Earlier he had advocated that Muslims were advancing from the state of community to a nation. Even if one conceded them a nationhood, can that be a sufficient basis for Pakistan?, he asks. According to him the Musalmans of India were not as yet a nation in the de jure or de facto sense of the term but they had in them the elements necessary to make them a nation. But even if they were granted nationhood, he contended that cannot necessarily constitute the basis for Pakistan. There were many countries in the world where more than one nationality resided under a single Constitution. There is Canada with its two prominent nationalities - the English and the French; South Africa with the English and the Dutch and Switzerland with even three nationalities - the Germans, the French and the Italians. None of these nationalities asked for partition of their respective countries. "On the contrary, all these distinct nations have been content to live together in one country under one constitution without fear of losing their nationality and their distinctive cultures. .... The case of Switzerland is worthy of note. It is surrounded by countries, the nationalities of which have a close religious and racial affinity with the nationalities of Switzerland. Notwithstanding these affinities the nationalities in Switzerland have been Swiss first and Germans, Italians and French afterwards."[62]

Dr. Ambedkar argues that even if the Muslims are assumed to be a nation, it does not warrant creation of Pakistan. Nation state is neither a necessity nor a right of nationality. Unless nationality develops feeling of nationalism, the question of nation state does not arise. He feels that India has not yet lost its 'organic filaments' to bind the country together. He writes, "Must there be Pakistan because the Musalmans are a nation? It is a pity that Mr. Jinnah should have become a votary and champion of Muslim Nationalism at a time when the whole world is decrying against the evils of nationalism and is seeking refuge in some kind of international organization. Mr. Jinnah is so obsessed with his new-found faith in Muslim Nationalism that he is not prepared to see that there is a distinction between a society, parts of which are disintegrated, and a society parts of which have become only loose, which no sane man can ignore. When a society is disintegrating - and the two nation theory is a positive disintegration of society and country

- it is evidence of the fact that there do not exist what Carlyle calls "organic filaments" - i.e., the vital forces which work to bind together the parts that are cut asunder. In such cases disintegration can only be regretted. It cannot be prevented. Where, however, such organic filaments do exist, it is a crime to overlook them and deliberately force the disintegration of society and country as the Muslims seem to be doing."[63]

He is also optimistic that India which is not a nation today can aspire and work for becoming a nation: "If the Musalmans want to be a different nation it is not because they have been but because they want to be. The view that seems to guide Mr. Jinnah is that Indians are only a people and that they can never be a nation. This follows the line of the British writers who make it a point of speaking of Indians as the people of India and avoid speaking of the Indian nation. Granted Indians are not a nation, that they are only a people. What of that? History records that before the rise of nations as great corporate personalities, there were only peoples. There is nothing to be ashamed if Indians are no more than a people. Nor is there any cause for despair that the people of India- if they wish - will not become one nation .....Is it right for the Muslim League to emphasize only differences and ignore altogether the forces that bind? Let it not be forgotten that if two nations come into being it will not be because it is predestined. It will be the result of deliberate design."[64]

Ambedkar demolishes a series of arguments from Muslim side for Pakistan. One of the apprehensions of Muslims was that the Swaraj will be the Hindu Raj. He finds it untenable because the Muslims had already reconciled living in more rabid a Hindu Raj than what the Swaraj Raj ever could be. Says he, "There are really millions of Musalmans in India who are living under unbridled and uncontrolled Hindu Raj of Hindu Princes and no objection to it has been raised by the Muslims or the Muslim League. The Muslims had once a conscientious objection to the British Raj. Today not only have they no objection to it but they are the greatest supporters of it. That there should be no objection to British Raj or to undiluted Hindu Raj of a Hindu Prince but that there should be objection to Swaraj for British

India on the ground that it is Hindu Raj as though it was not subjected to checks and balances is an attitude the logic of which it is difficult to follow."[65]

Even the political objection of Muslims that the Hindu society is not a democratic society, according to him, did not hold much water in the context that Muslims were not the worst sufferers of this evil. Muslims rather enjoyed better deals at the hands of the Hindus vis-à-vis other victims in this undemocratic society. Writes he, "The political objections to Hindu Raj rest on various grounds. The first ground is that Hindu society is not a democratic society. True, it is not. ... if the Musalmans are the only sufferers from the evils that admittedly result from the undemocratic character of Hindu society. Are not the millions of Shudras and non-Brahmins or millions of the Untouchables, suffering the worst consequences of the undemocratic character of Hindu society? ... Has not the governing class of the Hindus, which controls Hindu politics, shown more regard for safeguarding the rights and interests of the Musalmans than they have for safeguarding the rights and interests of the Shudras and the Untouchables? Is not Mr. Gandhi, who is determined to oppose any political concession to the Untouchables, ready to sign a blank cheque in favour of the Muslims? Indeed, the Hindu governing class seems to be far more ready to share power with the Muslims than it is to share power with the Shudras and the Untouchables. Surely, the Muslims have the least ground to complain of the undemocratic character of Hindu society."[66]

Having refuted the basis of the Muslims' misgiving about the Hindu Raj, Ambedkar prophetically declares, "If Hindu Raj does become a fact, it will, no doubt, be the greatest calamity for this country. No matter what the Hindus say, Hinduism is a menace to liberty, equality and fraternity. On that account it is incompatible with democracy. Hindu Raj must be prevented at any cost."[67] While the majority-minority problem existed in many countries, no where was any kind of communal Raj seen to have emerged. For example, there was no British Raj in Canada, Dutch Raj in South Africa or a German Raj in Switzerland. He observes, "What makes communal Raj possible is a marked disproportion in the relative strength of the various

communities living in a country." These countries have prevented the emergence of communal Raj by not allowing communalism in politics. He says, "Their method is to put a ban on communal parties in politics. No community in Canada, South Africa or Switzerland ever thinks of starting a separate communal party. What is important to note is that it is the minority nations which have taken the lead in opposing the formation of a communal party. For they know that if they form a communal political party the major community will also form a communal party and the majority community will thereby find it easy to establish its communal Raj. It is a vicious method of self-protection. It is because the minority nations are fully aware how they will be hoisted on their own petard that they have opposed the formation of communal political parties."[68]

While, he is sceptical about the innate imperialist characteristics of Hinduism creating such accommodative conditions for peaceful co-existence of minorities, he does not spare the Muslims for their own minority communalism. Blaming them for creating the demon of communalism, he says, "The Muslims are howling against the Hindu Maha Sabha and its slogan of Hindudom and Hindu Raj. But who is responsible for this? Hindu Maha Sabha and Hindu Raj are the inescapable nemesis which the Musalmans have brought upon themselves by having a Muslim League. It is action and counter-action. One gives rise to the other. Not partition, but the abolition, of the Muslim League and the formation of a mixed party of Hindus and Muslims is the only effective way of burying the ghost of Hindu Raj."69 He perceives no difficulty in the formation of a mixed party of Hindus and Muslims. "There are many lower orders in the Hindu society whose economic, political and social needs are the same as those of the majority of the Muslims and they would be far more ready to make a common cause with the Muslims for achieving common ends than they would with the high caste of Hindus who have denied and deprived them of ordinary human rights for centuries."70 He does not see this as adventure and reminds that under the Montagu-Chelmsford Reforms in most Provinces, the Muslims, the Non-Brahmins and the Depressed Classes had united together and worked the reforms as members of one team from 1920 to 1937. This he said was "the most

fruitful method of achieving communal harmony among Hindus and Muslims and of destroying the danger of a Hindu Raj."[71]

Dr. Ambedkar strikes at the root of the Muslim argument that the creation of Pakistan would solve the communal problem. He shows that instead of solving the problem, it is going to aggravate it. He calls the Pakistan scheme of the Muslim League as a political perversion because instead of solving the problem of the minority Muslims as professed, it makes them more vulnerable and favours the majority Muslims that do not need or deserve it. Focusing on the Muslim apprehension about the Hindu Raj, he writes, "Will Pakistan obviate the establishment of Hindu Raj in Provinces in which the Musalmans are in a minority? Obviously it cannot. This is what would happen in the Muslim minority Provinces if Pakistan came. Take an all-India view. Can Pakistan prevent the establishment of Hindu Raj at the centre over Muslim minorities that will remain Hindustan? It is plain that it cannot. What good is Pakistan then? Only to prevent Hindu Raj in Provinces in which the Muslims are in a majority and in which there could never be Hindu Raj!! To put it differently Pakistan is unnecessary to Muslims where they are in a majority because there, there is no fear of Hindu Raj. It is worse than useless to Muslims where they are in a minority, because Pakistan or no Pakistan they will have to face a Hindu Raj. Can politics be more futile than the politics of the Muslim League? The Muslim League started to help minority Muslims and has ended by espousing the cause of majority Muslims. What a perversion in the original aim of the Muslim League! What a fall from the sublime to the ridiculous! Partition as a remedy against Hindu Raj is worse than useless."[72]

While Dr. Ambedkar whole heartedly concedes the right of self determination to the Muslim people, at the rational plane he does not see creation of Pakistan going to solve any problem. "..if the Musalmans are bent on having Pakistan then it must be conceded to them.", and he justifies it on the grounds of defense of India and the sentiment of the Muslims.[73] No people should think that they can subjugate other people by force or by allurements. If they wish to live together, the condition must be created that inspire confidence in both about each

other. He cautions the Hindus that they cannot extract obedience from Muslims with force. The Swaraj that they want to have can have meaning only if this condition is created: "Is Swaraj to be an opportunity to serve the people or is it to be an opportunity for Hindus to conquer the Musalmans and for the Musalmans to conquer the Hindus? Swaraj must be a Government of the people by the people and for the people. This is the raison d'etre of Swaraj and the only justification for Swaraj. If Swaraj is to usher in an era in which the Hindus and the Muslims will be engaged in scheming against each other, the one planning to conquer its rival, why should we have Swaraj and why should the democratic nations allow such a Swaraj to come into existence ? It will be a snare, a delusion and a perversion."[74]

On December 15, 1946, full six years after the first publication of his book on 'Pakistan', his voice echoed the optimism in the Constituent Assembly when he said in his maiden speech, "I have no hesitation in saying that, notwithstanding the agitation of the League for the partition of India, some day enough light will dawn upon the Muslims themselves, and they, too, will begin to think that a United India is better for everybody"[75] It was a hope to see India as a nation, a secular nation. He severally points out secular India to be the basis for co-existence for not only Hindus and Muslims but all other people. While refuting every possible argument for Pakistan on a rationale plane he readily concedes the Muslim their right of self determination, if they strongly feel about it. The Pakistan case of Muslim League however pretended to have a rational basis and since the rationale only applied partly, there was still scope to create conditions to thwart sentiments in favour of the partition. But, this onus was on the Hindus!

Myth 9
Ambedkar detested Muslims as Anti-Reform

Dr. Ambedkar certainly had high regard for Islam for its egalitarianism and regretted that it lost it in India. He writes, "Although Islam is the one religion which can transcend race and colour and unite diverse people into a compact brotherhood, yet Islam in India has not succeeded in uprooting caste from among the Indian Musalmans."[76] Although he finds caste feeling among the Musalmans not as virulent as it is among the Hindus, he is pained to find it all the same. He writes, "That this caste feeling among the Musalmans leads to social gradation, a feature of the Muslim Community in India, has been noticed by all those who have had an occasion to study the subject."[77]

Dr. Ambedkar was very critical of certain customs among the Muslims and more so of their lack of will to change them. He comes out heavily against the custom of Purdah for instance for the Muslism women. Ambedkar discusses its devastating impact on every aspect of the life of the Muslim woman. He expresses his disgust at this custom when he observes, "These burka women walking in the streets is one of the most hideous sights one can witness in India. Such seclusion cannot but have its deteriorating effects upon the physical constitution of Muslim women. They are usually victims to anemia, tuberculosis and

pyorrhea. Their bodies are deformed, with their backs bent, bones protruded, hands and feet crooked. Ribs, joints and nearly all their bones ache. Heart palpitation is very often present in them. The result of this pelvic deformity is untimely death at the time of delivery. Purdah deprives Muslim women of mental and moral nourishment. Being deprived of healthy social life, the process of moral degeneration must and does set in. Being completely secluded from the outer world, they engage their minds in petty family quarrels with the result that they become narrow and restricted in their outlook."[78]

He recounts the violence that this evil custom does to the Muslim women. The evil consequences of purdah, as per Ambedkar go well beyond the Muslim community and are responsible for the social segregation of Hindus from Muslims which is the bane of public life in India. Purdah system can be found among certain sections of the Hindus in certain parts of the country but unlike Muslims, it has no religious sanctity. "Purdah has deeper roots among the Muslims than it has among the Hindus and can only be removed by facing the inevitable conflict between religious injunctions and social needs. The problem of purdah is a real problem with the Muslims-apart from its origin-which it is not with the Hindus. Of any attempt by the Muslims to do away with it, there is no evidence."[79]

Ambedkar notes stagnation not only in the social life but also in the political life of the Muslim community in India. He observes that the Muslims have no interest in politics; their predominant interest is religion. "This can be easily seen by the terms and conditions that a Muslim constituency makes for its support to a candidate fighting for a seat. The Muslim constituency does not care to examine the programme of the candidate. All that the constituency wants from the candidate is that he should agree to replace the old lamps of the masjid by supplying new ones at his cost, to provide a new carpet for the masjid because the old one is torn, or to repair the masjid because it has become dilapidated. .... Muslim politics takes no note of purely secular categories of life, namely, the differences between rich and poor, capital and labour, landlord and tenant, priest and layman, reason and superstition. Muslim politics is essentially clerical and recognizes

only one difference, namely, that existing between Hindus and Muslims. None of the secular categories of life have any place in the politics of the Muslim community and if they do find a place-and they must because they are irrepressible-they are subordinated to one and the only governing principle of the Muslim political universe, namely, religion."[80]

Dr. Ambedkar finds all the social evils that characterize the Hindu society present in the Muslim society too. What disturbs Ambedkar is not the existence of these evils among the Muslims but the utter "absence of any organized social reform movement on a scale sufficient to bring about their eradication."81 Unlike the Hindus amongst whom at least some have awakened to the social evils and started exerting pressure for their eradication, there is no awareness among Muslims about these evils, not to talk of any agitation for their removal.[82]

"Are the Muslims therefore anti-reform?", he asks. "The usual answer to this question is in affirmative. The Muslims all over the world are considered an unprogressive people and this view appears to accord with the facts of history. After the initial leaps of progress during which vast Islamic empires got built, the Muslims suddenly fell into a strange condition of torpor, from which they never seem to have recovered. Generally, the reason given by the scholars for this phenomenon was in terms of "the fundamental assumption made by all Muslims that Islam is a world religion, suitable for all people, for all times and for all conditions."[83] The religious law of the Muslims has had the effect of imparting to the very diverse individuals, of whom the world is composed, a unity of thought, of feeling, of ideas, of judgment. This uniformity is deadening and is not merely imparted to the Muslims, but is imposed upon them by a spirit of intolerance which is unknown anywhere outside the Muslim world for its severity and its violence and which is directed towards the suppression of all rational thinking which is in conflict with the teachings of Islam.[84] This is the answer one gets for the stagnation in the Muslim world.

It should be noted that Ambedkar faults this stereotype answer. Having acknowledged all the evils afflicting the Muslim community with due disgust, he still refuses to locate them entirely within itself. The social

scientist in him observes, "This answer though obvious, cannot be the true answer. If it were the true answer, how are we to account for the stir and ferment that is going on in all Muslim countries outside India, where the spirit of inquiry, the spirit of change and the desire to reform are noticeable in every walk of life? Indeed, the social reforms which have taken place in Turkey have been of the most revolutionary character. If Islam has not come in the way of the Muslims of these countries, why should it come in the way of the Muslims of India? There must be some special reason for the social and political stagnation of the Muslim community in India."[85]

And he goes on finding out that special reason: "It seems to me that the reason for the absence of the spirit of change in the Indian Musalman is to be sought in the peculiar position he occupies in India. He is placed in a social environment which is predominantly Hindu. That Hindu environment is always silently but surely encroaching upon him. He feels that it is de-musalmanazing him. As a protection against this gradual weaning away he is led to insist on preserving everything that is Islamic without caring to examine whether it is helpful or harmful to his society. Secondly, the Muslims in India are placed in a political environment which is also predominantly Hindu. He feels that he will be suppressed and that political suppression will make the Muslims a depressed class. It is this consciousness that he has to save himself from being submerged by the Hindus socially and-politically, which to my mind is the primary cause why the Indian Muslims as compared with their fellows outside are backward in the matter of social reform. Their energies are directed to maintaining a constant struggle against the Hindus for seats and posts in which there is no time, no thought and no room for questions relating to social reform. And if there is any, it is all overweighed and suppressed by the desire, generated by pressure of communal tension, to close the ranks and offer a united front to the menace of the Hindus and Hinduism by maintaining their socio-religious unity at any cost."[86]

"The same is the explanation of the political stagnation in the Muslim community of India. Muslim politicians do not recognize secular categories of life as the basis of their politics because to them it means

the weakening of the community in its fight against the Hindus. The poor Muslims will not join the poor Hindus to get justice from the rich. Muslim tenants will not join Hindu tenants to prevent the tyranny of the landlord. Muslim labourers will not join Hindu labourers in the fight of labour against capital. Why? The answer is simple. The poor Muslim sees that if he joins in the fight of the poor against the rich, he may be fighting against a rich Muslim. The Muslim tenant feels that if he joins in the campaign against the landlord, he may have to fight against a Muslim landlord. A Muslim labourer feels that if he joins in the onslaught of labour against capital, he will be injuring a Muslim mill-owner. He is conscious that any injury to a rich Muslim, to a Muslim landlord or to a Muslim mill-owner, is a disservice to the Muslim community, for it is thereby weakened in its struggle against the Hindu community."[87]

He illustrates how this insecurity has perverted Muslim politics through the irrational responses of the Muslim leaders to the political reforms in the Indian States. "The Muslims and their leaders carried on a great agitation for the introduction of representative government in the Hindu State of Kashmir. The same Muslims and their leaders are deadly opposed to the introduction of representative governments in other Muslim States. The reason for this strange attitude is quite simple. In all matters, the determining question with the Muslims is how it will affect the Muslims vis-à-vis the Hindus. If representative government can help the Muslims, they will demand it, and fight for it. In the State of Kashmir the ruler is a Hindu, but the majority of the subjects are Muslims. The Muslims fought for representative government in Kashmir, because representative government in Kashmir meant the transfer of power from a Hindu king to the Muslim masses. In other Muslim States, the ruler is a Muslim but the majority of his subjects are Hindus. In such States representative government means the transfer of power from a Muslim ruler to the Hindu masses, and that is why the Muslims support the introduction of representative government in one case and oppose it in the other. The dominating consideration with the Muslims is not democracy. The dominating consideration is how democracy with majority rule will affect the Muslims in their struggle against the Hindus. Will it strengthen them

or will it weaken them? If democracy weakens them, they will not have democracy. They will prefer the rotten state to continue in the Muslim States rather than weaken the Muslim ruler in his hold upon his Hindu subjects."[88]

Ambedkar perceptibly observes: "If the Muslims in other countries have undertaken the task of reforming their society and the Muslims of India have refused to do so, it is because the former are free from communal and political clashes with rival communities, while the latter are not."89 He thus makes key observations about these communities that the Hindus and the Muslims regard each other as a menace and that to meet this menace, both have suspended the cause of removing the social evils with which they are infested. It is obvious that so long as one community looks upon the other as a menace there will be no social progress and the spirit of conservatism will continue to dominate the thoughts and actions of both.

All these criticisms of and negative opinions on the Muslim community might elate the Hindutva brigade into projecting Ambedkar as anti-Muslims. But is it really true? Not a bit. Anybody who has cared to read Ambedkar's own analysis as to why the Indian Muslim society has been so moribund and inward looking would gather rather the contrary impression. Ambedkar flatly refuses the stereotype explanations offered for the regressive character of the Indian Muslim society as being some thing intrinsic to it; to be traced to Islam that does not permit any thinking beyond its confines. Ambedkar finds this explanation untenable because the Muslim societies in other countries had already undertaken far reaching radical reforms without forsaking Islam. The reason for the Muslim backwardness in India that he comes out with lies in its peculiar Hindu surrounding. Hindu society lacks the value of sharing with others; it is essentially hegemonic; intrinsically violent; violence being the imprint of all Hindu gods. It is incapable of creating an assuring atmosphere for others who do not accept its hegemony. It is this characteristic of the Hindu surrounding that creates perpetual sense of insecurity in Muslims and made them ultra-conservative. This being the truth, it is better left to the readers to judge whether Ambedkar was anti-Muslims!

Myth 10
Ambedkar was on the side of the Hindus

Notwithstanding the fact that Dr. Ambedkar symbolizes the greatest critique of Hinduism and Hindu society, the Hindutva forces try to present him as though he was one of their own. His criticism not only relates with the scriptural aspects of Hinduism but also with its operational aspects. Ultimately, it transcends the boundaries of words and culminates to the realm of historic action; into forsaking the Hindu fold and embracing Buddhism that was born basically as a rebellion against Brahmanism. What, one wonders could be a bigger criticism than what Ambedkar did to Hinduism! Despite it, however, the Hindutva forces persist with their Goebblesque propaganda that Ambedkar was on their side. It is comic to see them use even his rebellious act of conversion to Buddhism in support of their claim that he chose Buddhism not for it tenets, not for its rationality, not for its being antithesis to Brahmanism, but as an offshoot of Hinduism as he loved Hindu culture so much that he did not want to go out of its fold!

Even in the context of communal problem dealt with in the Thoughts on Pakistan, Dr. Ambedkar has been unsparingly critical of the Hindu versions. As we have seen before, he had dismissed their characterization of the medieval invaders as 'Muslim' invaders. He

attributed many of the evils that Indian Muslim society displayed to the dominance of Hinduism. He criticized the Hindus for being intrinsically undemocratic, incapable of sharing the good things in life with others, essentially hegemonic and intrinsically violent. Although, he acknowledges the historical, cultural and social factors in creating the communal divide between Muslims and Hindus, he tends to attribute its unbridgeability to the innate imperialist attitude of the Hindus. Notwithstanding, these facts, we can still search if any straw could be found in the text of Pakistan - Hindutva's favourite book by Ambedkar, to clutch at for proving our hypothesis.

The section on the Hindu alternative to Pakistan perhaps provides the best place to focus, firstly because it represents the Hindutva vision for the country and secondly, since it involves Hindutva's greatest icon, Savarkar, it would lend it representative legitimacy.

While discussing the Hindu- alternatives to Pakistan Dr. Ambedkar considered Lala Hardayal's scheme comprising (1) Hindu Sangalhan, (2) Hindu Raj, (3) Shuddhi of Moslems, and (4) Conquest and Shuddhi of Afghanistan and the Frontiers. Although, it may not represent the official Hindutva, its belonging to the Hindutva stable cannot be denied. It held that "The Hindu race has but one history, and its institutions are homogeneous." But since "the Musalmans and Christians are far removed from the confines of Hindustan, for their religions are alien and they love Persian, Arab and European institutions", Shuddhi must be made of these two religions". It proposed to conquer Afghanistan, which was formerly part of India, but is at present under the domination of Islam, and the hilly regions of the frontier and convert them into Hindu religion"; otherwise it was "useless to win Swaraj", it contended. It may sound ridiculous today but such is the stuff the Hindutva is made of!

In fact it is not far removed from the Hindutva vision of Akhand Bharat. It is amazing that Dr. Ambedkar considers this ridiculous scheme as an alternative and lends it respectability by taking it for his scholarly dissection. One must understand that this is done to present dispassionate analysis of the issue at hand. Dr. Ambedkar tears this scheme apart not in a dismissive manner as it deserved but in the most

considerate manner. He points out that the proselytising aspiration of Hinduism was incompatible with its constitution. Caste that characterized its constitution is not compatible with conversion. "To be able to convert a stranger to its religion, it is not enough for a community to offer its creed. It must be in a position to admit the convert to its social life and to absorb and assimilate him among its kindred. It is not possible for the Hindu society to satisfy this prerequisite of effective conversion...So long as Hindu society is fragmented in autonomous and autogenic castes, Hindu religion cannot be a missionary religion. The conversion of the Afghans and the frontier tribes to Hinduism is, therefore, an idle dream."[90]

Another alternative is provided by the official icon of Hindutva- V. D. Savarkar. Dr. Ambedkar (perhaps sarcastically) praises Savarkar's Hindutva alternative for its frankness, boldness and definiteness that distinguished it from the irregularity, vagueness and indefiniteness which characterized the Congress declarations about minority rights. (Doesn't it ring familiar in the context of soft Hindutva of Congress and Hard Hindutva of BJP today?) The Hindutva scheme is open in telling the Muslims, thus far and no further; they know definitely what is in store for them in the Hindu Rashtra. However, he finds Savarkar's attitude illogical in admitting a separate nationhood for the Muslims and conceding them a right to cultural autonomy and even a national flag but denying them a separate national home. In this, he points out that Savarkar "is really creating a most dangerous situation for the safety and security of India." He says, "One can understand and even appreciate the wisdom of the theory of suppression of the minor nation by the major nation because the ultimate aim is to bring into being one nation. But one cannot follow what advantage a theory has which says that there must ever be two nations but that there shall be no divorce between them. One can justify this attitude only if the two nations were to live as partners in friendly intercourse with mutual respect and accord. But that is not to be, because Mr. Savarkar will not allow the Muslim nation to be co-equal in authority with the Hindu nation. He wants the Hindu nation to be the dominant nation and the Muslim nation to be the (sub)servient nation. Why Mr. Savarkar, after sowing this seed of enmity between the Hindu

nation and the Muslim nation should want that they should live under one constitution and occupy one country, is difficult to explain."[91]

The above observations of Ambedkar are obviously limited to the Hindu alternatives to Pakistan. Despite this limitation, his cryptic comments on the character of Hindus and Hindu society, their harebrained schemes and imperialist attitude towards others comes out clearly all through the commentary. It should be interesting to Sangh Pariwar and its cohorts like Mr. Vinay Katiyar who are ever ready to grab an opportunity to malign Ambedkar both in his derision as well eulogy to know what Ambedkar had to say on the scheme of their Hindu Hridaysamrat Savarkar.

Even on a commonplace Hindutva canard against the Muslims that they consider themselves Muslims first and Indians afterwards, or in other words their loyalties primarily are pan-Islamic and only secondarily Indian, there is a comment available by Dr. Ambedkar in the context of effecting Hindu-Muslim unity through the unifying force of Government. While recounting the failure of the central government in making India a nation over 150 years, he holds 'the genius of the Indians' responsible for it. "There is among Indians no passion for unity, no desire for fusion...There is no will to give up what is local and particular for something which is common and national."92 It may be noted that 'Indians' here largely refers to the Hindus. For, Ambedkar soon comes to refer to Hindus that they are no better than Muslims in their consciousness of national identity. Writes he, "Such is the mentality of Hindus, who accuse the Musalman of want of national feeling when he says "I am a Musalman first and Indian afterwards "Can any one suggest that there exists anywhere in India even among the Hindus an instinct or a passion that would put any semblance of emotion behind their declaration "Civis Indianus sum", or the smallest consciousness of a moral and social unity, which desires to give expression by sacrificing whatever is particular and local in favour of what is common and unifying? There is no such consciousness and no such desire. Without such consciousness and no such desire, to depend upon Government to bring about unification is to deceive oneself."[93]

What does it suggest? It suggests that Dr. Ambedkar certainly did not have any empathy for the Hindus. Whenever he discussed the evils of Muslims, he appears unsparingly critical about their conservatism but soon in an analytical mode he starts seeing Hindus to be the culprits. There is hardly an instance that Hindus are let off without bearing the ultimate responsibility for whatever evil we find around us. This being the case, it is absolutely mischievous to say that Ambedkar sided with the Hindus in the Hindu-Muslim conflict. It is rather demeaning to think that he could take sides as the Hindutva forces suggest. Prejudice is a privilege of petty people. Dr. Ambedkar was a giant, capable of seeing through things and speaking out what he felt without any fear.

Myth 11
Ambedkar was a Nationalist

The Sangh Pariwar's patent trick is to project Dr. Ambedkar as a great nationalist. This, in fact, is the tactical reversal of their earlier stand to oppose him by lending tacit support to the canard that he was a stooge of British imperialism and opposed to the struggle for India's independence, spread through some pseudo-intellectuals. They could not persist with their opposition because Dr. Ambedkar had grown into a reigning deity for all the Dalits and a veritable symbol for all that is progressive in this country. The canard against him could moreover easily boomerang as the Sangh Pariwar deserved it more than anybody else. Once it realised the difficulty in directly opposing Dr. Ambedkar, it adopted its proven strategy of cooptation. It has since been working systematically to show him progressively in saffron colours. One thing that it most emphasises is the nationalism of Dr. Ambedkar. Nationalism imposed on him is the stone with which it sought to kill several birds. One, it is a respectable epitaph; adoring Dr. Ambedkar with it cannot be easily objected to by the opponents, two, having it conferred upon their leader, the Dalits will be generally happy and softened towards the Sangh Pariwar, three, it will help transform its image from traditional reactionaries to the progressive nationalist, four, it will broaden their constituency, and so on and so forth.

It was confounding therefore that a few years back they commissioned Arun Shourie to restart the canard with his 600 odd pages junk book called 'Worshiping False Gods'. Arun Shourie, a known rank rightist, who has been serving the Hindutva agenda with his negative writings on Christians, Muslims, and communists, had the temerity to denigrate Dr. Ambedkar. In his typical shallow journalistic style he accused him of, among other things, lacking in nationalism, for which no known person from the Sangh Pariwar came forward to refute. Instead, Arun Shourie was awarded a ministerial berth in the BJP-led NDA cabinet with increasingly important portfolios being given to him. It proved beyond doubt that he enjoyed extraordinarily high esteem in the Sangh Pariwar and exposed his antecedents. Unless, it is a part of the Sangh Pariwar stratagem, to test out the reaction of the masses on a certain issue by issuing starkly contradictory statements, the Arun Shourie act would remain inexplicable.

Notwithstanding Arun Shourie's invectives, the Sangh Pariwar appears still stuck to its propaganda that Dr. Ambedkar was a great nationalist. Even its other eulogy that "he was the greatest benefactor of Hinduism" essentially comes imbued with the same sense of nationalism. Its explanation runs as follows: In spite of suffering inhuman caste discrimination all his life, Dr. Ambedkar did not like to do harm to Hindu culture and the Hindu nation; he could have easily chosen Islam or Christianity that had promised him vast material assistance for the development of Dalits and avenged the injustice done to him by causing irreversible damage to the Hindu nation, but instead he embraced Buddhism, a sect of Hinduism! Because he loved Indian culture; he did not want any harm to come to cultural nationalism. It is a different matter that despite stray political statement that he made implying these considerations, there are volumes of material to show the real reasons for his choice of Buddhism, like its compatibility with the modern scientific outlook and its convergence with his own vision and conception of liberty, equality and fraternity. The bottom line is that the Sangh Pariwar still holds Dr. Ambedkar as a great nationalist.

Was Dr. Ambedkar really a nationalist? Many people will be aghast at

such a Shouriesque blasphemy. Because it has been ingrained in our minds that nationalism is an unquestionable virtue, it is always good, it is progressive. Nationalism is closely related to the love of one's country, with our freedom struggle and the blood of our martyrs. It has always been a subject of warm commendation and is regarded as a noble passion. Everyone tends to take it as a universally desirable attribute without bothering to ask what constitutes the country. Is the country the soil or a spot on earth on which we happen to be born; the trees, the rivers, the mountains that map it; the forests and fields that span across it? The country could viably mean people living within this boundary. But who are these people? Are people a homogenous mass? Nationalism inspired people to battle for their freedom, to assert their right of self-determination, to get them a nation state. But what is nationalism thereafter? What role does it perform after independence is won? The nationalist mandate for loving one's country invariably reduces to being loyal to the state, to the mechanism of command and control - a system of oppression in corollary. Is nationalism still an absolute good, a virtue? These are some of the questions that could be asked in justification of the former question: 'Was Ambedkar a nationalist?'

We must know that nationalism is not universally good. It can be progressive and regressive, constructive and destructive. It may initially emerge in a society as a positive urge for self determination or as a part of its developmental process. But it does not disappear after this; rather it becomes embedded in the functioning of that society in future. It reduces to a manifestation of national identity, giving rise to the politics of identity, as opposed to the politics of interest. Nationalism is essentially a mass movement governed by the elite. The elite use it as a vehicle for social mobility, a method of redefinition. They do it either through management or outright manipulation. Nationalism thus tends to degenerate into reactionary creeds like Fascism, Nazism or their native version of Hindutva. It may be interesting for readers that Dr. Ambedkar was aware of these pitfalls of nationalism and therefore, he was not blindly sold to the idea, propagated from various camps. Instead, he chose to pursue his narrow goal of emancipation of the untouchables with the universalist's zeal.

Dr. Ambedkar's concerns were people, oppressed people and their well being not the abstract notions of nation or nationalism or something so incidental as country. For instance he writes, "Not to make a distinction between the freedom of the country and the freedom of the people in the country is to allow oneself to be misled, if not deceived. For, words such as society, nation and country are just amorphous if not ambiguous terms. There is no gainsaying that 'nation' though one word means many classes. Philosophically, it may be possible to consider a nation as a unit but sociologically it cannot but be regarded as consisting of many classes and the freedom of the nation, if it is to be a reality, must vouchsafe the freedom of the different classes comprised in it, particularly of those who are treated as the servile classes."94 He writes further, "People are led to believe that if they are to achieve national freedom, they must maintain unity, that all questions regarding reservations in the Legislatures, Executives and the Public Services are inimical to national unity and that, therefore, for anyone interested in national freedom it is a sin to support those who ask for such reservation. "That is the attitude of the governing class in India. ... It is a misuse of nationalism. But the governing class does not feel any compunction for such misuse."[95]

In the heydays of nationalism, Dr. Ambedkar saw it being a tool in the hands of the ruling classes to subjugate the ruled ones. It was used to effectively dodge the real issues of people, by intoxicating them with parochial sentiments to see the enemy within their own class. He writes, "To put it briefly the governing class is aware that a political campaign based on class ideology, class interests, class issues and class conflicts will toll its death knell. It knows that the most effective way of side tracking the servile classes and fooling them is to play upon the sentiment of nationalism and national unity and realizes that the Congress platform is the only platform that can most effectively safeguard the interest of the governing class. For if there is any platform from which all talk of conflict between rich and poor, Brahmin and Non-Brahmin, landlord and tenant, creditor and debtor which does not suit the governing class, can be effectual banned it is the Congress platform which is not only bound to preach nationalism and national unity which is what the governing classes want and on which their

safety entirely depends, but which prohibits any other ideology inconsistent with nationalism being preached from its platform."96 The Congress platform in the passage is really a proxy for any ruling class party, and in today's context, includes the BJP.

Dr. Ambedkar denies that there was anything like an Indian nation. Still the Hindus were presenting an alibi of the non-existent Indian nation in order to refuse the demand for separate electorates for the Dalits. He writes, "The objection to separate electorate raised by the Hindus is that separate electorate means the fragmentation of the nation. The reply is obvious. First of all, there is no nation of Indians in the real sense of the word. The nation does not exist, it is to be created, and I think it will be admitted that the suppression of a distinct and a separate community is not the method of creating a nation."[97]

As seen above, Dr. Ambedkar did acknowledge nationalism to be the great force in history which has been instrumental in shaping the modern world. But, unlike the Sangh Pariwar and most others belonging to the ruling classes, he rejects that nation and nationalism can be entirely based on such ethereal things like race, religion, ethnicity, language, culture, geography etc. without there being a material base. He emphasizes that this material base can only be provided by the living experiences of people; it can only be the real basis for nation and nationalism. He respects nationalism as the sentiment of the people to free themselves from the yoke of alien rule, to inspire them to achieve self-government and self-determination. For him, nationalism is a liberating force, as can be seen in its origins in the French Revolution, not trickery as used by the Sangh Pariwar!

He tells us, "The French Revolution gave rise to two 'principles-the principle of self-government and the principle of self-determination. The principle of self-government expresses the desire of the people to rule itself, rather than be ruled by others, whether the rulers be absolute monarchs, dictators, or the privileged classes. It is called 'democracy'.

The principle of self-determination expresses the desire of a people united by common ideals and common purposes to decide, without external compulsion; its political status-whether independence,

interdependence, or union with other peoples of the world. This is called nationalism. The hope of humanity was centred on the fructification of these principles. Unfortunately, after a lapse of nearly 140 years, these principles have failed to take root. The old regime has continued cither in all its nakedness or by making sham concessions to these two principles. Barring a few countries, there was neither self-government "nor self-determination in the world.[98]

It is interesting to observe that for Dr. Ambedkar, the utility of nationalism lies in providing inspiration for people to liberate them from alien rule. The best setting for nationalism therefore, was manifested during the colonial rule. Although, nationalism had originated in Europe, it became the worst nemesis of the European nations that had colonized most countries of the world. It inspired anti-colonial struggles in all these countries and created a paradigm for national liberation. Paradoxically, the Hindutva propagandists of nationalism were just nowhere to be seen during this phase of anti-colonial struggle that embedded the raison d'etre for nationalism, but are suddenly seen vigorously monopolizing nationalism when it is least warranted. Yes, there is still a role for nationalism, thanks to the compradors of their own ilk, insofar as they brought in a new demon of neo-colonialism to suck the blood of people. Their nationalism is not pitted against this neo-colonialism; it searches hapless people around as its enemy to be butchered, it engages people in internecine killings in order to help neo-colonialism carry out its loot unhindered. It should be noted that Dr. Ambedkar is totally opposed to this nationalism. It is only in situations warranting pragmatic outlook, where he is found to use nationalism, but it still reflects a sense of universal brotherhood of all people in India. In contrast, the Sangh Pariwar uses nationalism to fragment people by the brute force of its majority communalism.

He articulates the self-government and self-determination of people on behalf of the working class in quite radical terms that certainly transcends the parochial boundaries of a nation and nationalism and envisions universal brotherhood:

"Labour wants liberty. There is perhaps nothing new in this. What is

new is Labour's conception of liberty. Labour's conception of liberty is not merely the negative conception of absence of restraint. Nor is Labour's conception of liberty confined to the mere recognition of the right of the people to vote. Labour's conception of liberty is very positive. It involves the idea of Government by the people. Government by the people, in the opinion of Labour does not mean Parliamentary Democracy. Parliamentary Democracy is a form of Government which the function of the people has come to be to vote for their masters and leave them to rule. Such a scheme of Government, in the opinion of Labour, is a travesty of Government by the people. Labour wants Government which is Government by the people in name as well as in fact. Secondly, liberty as conceived by Labour includes the right to equal opportunity and the duty of the State to provide the fullest facilities for growth to every individual according to his needs.

Labour wants equality. By equality Labour means abolition of privileges of every kind in law, in the civil service, in the Army, in taxation, in trade and in industry: in fact the abolition of all processes which lead to inequality.

Labour wants fraternity. By fraternity it means an all-pervading sense of human brotherhood, uniting all classes and all nations, with "peace on earth and goodwill towards man" as its motto."[99]

Dr. Ambedkar was not a nationalist in a real sense. Like any great humanist, he believed in internationalism. Those who are familiar with his discourse on Liberty, Equality and Fraternity, can easily see his vision encompassing humankind as a whole. His conception of religion likewise is universal. Even when he speaks about nationalism, it is never in parochial terms; beyond conventional terms, he relates the issues of exploitation with his conception of nationalism. Dr. Ambedkar speaks out his vision of internationalism and blasts together many fads of cultural nationalism:

"More serious opponents of Labour are, of course, the Nationalists. .... As to nationalism, Labour's attitude is quite clear. Labour is not prepared to make a fetish of nationalism. If nationalism means the worship of the ancient past-the discarding of everything that is not

local in origin and colour-then Labour cannot accept nationalism as its creed. Labour cannot allow the living faith of the dead to become the dead faith of the living. Labour will not allow the ever expanding spirit of man to be strangled by the hand of the past which has no meaning for the present and no hope for the future; nor will it allow it to be cramped in a narrow jacket of local particularism. Labour must constantly insist upon renovating the life of the people by being ever ready to borrow in order to repair, transform and recreate the body politic. If nationalism stands in the way of this rebuilding and reshaping of life, then Labour must deny nationalism."

"Labour's creed is internationalism. Labour is interested in nationalism only because the wheels of democracy-such as representative Parliaments, responsible Executive, constitutional conventions, etc.-work better in a community united by national sentiments. Nationalism to Labour is only a means to an end. It is not an end in itself to which Labour can agree to sacrifice what it regards as the most essential principles of life."[100]

Although he is speaking in the context (World War II, during which nationalist fervour was at its peak) and in the role (he was a member of the Governor General's Executive Council) that warrants certain caution, any discerning student should have no problem in accepting his underlying concerns for the material wellbeing of people and his disgust towards the intrigues of fanning frenzy with the sentiments of nation and nationalism. He says, "The third besetting sin of the labouring classes is the easy way which they are led away by an appeal to Nationalism. The working classes who are beggared in every way and who have very little to spare, often sacrifice their all to the so-called cause of Nationalism. They have never cared to enquire whether the nationalism for which they are to make their offerings will, when established, give them social and economic equality. More often than not, the free independent national state which emerges from successful nationalism and which reared on their sacrifices turns to be the enemy of the working class under the hegemony of their masters. This is the worst kind of exploitation that Labour has allowed itself to be subjected to."[101]

Far from being supporter or upholder of cultural or any kind of nationalism, Dr. Ambedkar thus can be seen as opposed to the concept of nationalism insofar as it conflicts with his vision of "Liberty. Equality and Fraternity"!

Concluding Remarks

It indeed is an amusing paradox that the Sangh Pariwar whose aim is to make India a Hindu Rashtra, based on the 'unique' values, traditions, belief, faith and culture of ancient India, in place of the current secular, republican structure which is based on the Constitutional parliamentary democracy, seeks to use Ambedkar, who more than anyone else is identified with the existing structure that it wants to demolish and who has been the biggest critique of everything Hindu that they want to revive. At one end, it toys with denying him credit for making of the Constitution or for contributing to nation-building and childishly maligns him as a 'false god' while at the other, it ensconces him in its sanctum sanctorum and eulogizes as the 'true nationalist', the greatest benefactor of the Hinduism and Hindu nation.

It is almost impossible to rationally delineate the stand of the master myth- makers in the Sangh Pariwar on Babasaheb Ambedkar or for that matter on any live issue. Because, basically what they say does not represent their stand; it rather reflects the shifting sands with which they make their myths. Myths, as Kappen says, are mere symbolic interpretation of reality in terms of transcendent events, events in a

time beyond time, and a place beyond place; they are meant only to evoke unconditional faith and commitment; they are never an object of contemplation but an invitation to action.102 Myths therefore can only be understood in terms of their end use. The myth of 'false god' in denigration of Babasaheb Ambedkar through some pseudo intellectual who is not technically a part of the Pariwar serves the end use of causing crack in the solidifying social belief system that granted him greatness, without incurring the loss by alienating the dalit masses from the Pariwar. The Myth of Ambedkar the greatest is anyway aimed at wooing them.

The only problem with the Sangh Pariwar is that it is wrong in both, denigration of as well as acclamation to Ambedkar. Ambedkar's greatness does not lie in either making of the Constitution or in contributing to building of the Indian nation, which if denied could prove that he was a 'false god'. It only reflected intellectual bankruptcy and fruitless begari of those who indulged in this intrigue. As for acclamation, Ambedkar is adored as a true nationalist that as we have seen in the foregoing discussion, he was not. He is praised as the greatest benefactor of the Hinduism and Hindu nation because he embraced Buddhism that the Sangh Pariwar includes into its smoggy definition of the Hinduness. The fact is that Babasaheb Ambedkar embraced Buddhism because it symbolized the greatest revolt against Brahmanism that the Sangh Pariwar seeks to revive; it gave a lofty vision of 'liberty, equality and fraternity' for mankind and because it was a non-religion that could effortlessly accommodate modernity. For him "Hinduism is a menace to liberty, equality and fraternity"!

Ambedkar's greatness lies in his enlivening the mass of people who were denuded of their every right and even human identity by the 'unique values, traditions, belief, faith and culture of ancient India' that the Sangh Pariwar so proudly upholds. His greatness lies in being able to rise above the immediate, while engaged in the existential struggle for the emancipation of the downtrodden, and articulating a vision for the human future. His greatness lies in dissecting the cobweb

of Indian societal structure that the Brahmanic hegemony weaved over millennia and indicating the ways to destroy it; it lies in hinting at the design of a key for the Indian democratic revolution. Pity, the people who swear by his name are blissfully unaware of this and are prepared to fall prey to the poisonous propaganda of the Sangh Pariwar. It is here that the Sangh Pariwar sees its opportunity.

The Dalits and Adivasis have always constituted the core of the Hindutva myth ever since its seeds were laid in the movement for Hindu Sanghtan or Hindu nationalism in the 19th century because they define the boundaries of the Hindu empire. The upper caste Hindu hegemon was ever worried, having been badly bruised and humiliated under the Muslim rule for nearly eight centuries, having lost almost one-fifth of its population to Islam mostly from these oppressed groups, about the vulnerability of its margins and the threat to its societal and cultural hegemony. Moreover, the Sangh Pariwar knows it cannot enact its fascist Hindutva agenda without these oppressed people. They are required to do its foot soldiery as demonstrated in the Gujarat 'experiment'. They need to be kept shackled in false consciousness. Taking advantage of the Ambedkar-centric sentimentalism that the Dalits themselves created as substitute of their every movement, it shrewdly jumped to co-opt Ambedkar, mythicize his thoughts, demolish 'Dalit' consciousness and get the Dalits to execute its fascist agenda.

The Dalits must understand the evil schema of the Sangh Pariwar. Babasaheb Ambedkar was too great a person to be prejudiced against a particular people. Showing him so is not only a falsehood but a deliberate act of insult. The Sangh Pariwar woos them by transcending caste. Caste is not something that can be switched off by a myth of 'Hindu Unity'. Their contradictions with the forces that represent Hindutva are too deep seated to be brushed over by such euphemisms. Far beyond their existential concerns, which might impel them to seek shelter under Hindutva, they must realize their emancipation is integrated with the liberation of all the oppressed people. They have

to rescue their Ambedkar from the enemy camp; learn to see in him the radical science of liberation of mankind. Parochialism, xenophobia, obscurantism, caste or communalism is antithetical to Ambedkar-thought. Every oppressed person, no matter which country, race, religion he or she belongs to, is a friend of a Dalit and every oppressor his foe!

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